



MESSENGER

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Our Seventy-fifth Year





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This issue's articles are all by AIMM-related personnel. Compassionate care has always been a concern of AIMM since health ministries were on Jesus' agenda, too. Insights by two medical doctors, one a Zairian, the other a North American, are found on pages 4 and 10. These perspectives were first shared with the AIMM Board in sessions at Graybill, Indiana.

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together in ministry...

Africa Inter-Mennonite Mission is a partnership of five conferences of churches; the Evangelical Mennonite Church, the Evangelical Mennonite Brethren, the Evangelical Mennonite Conference of Canada, the General Conference Mennonite Church, and the Mennonite Brethren.

1986 ~ Our 75th Year

Dr. Makina A. Nganga is Medical Director of the Community Health Program of the Mennonite Church of Zaire (CMZ). He prepared this article for presentation to the AIMM Board while doing post-graduate studies at Tulane University, New Orleans.

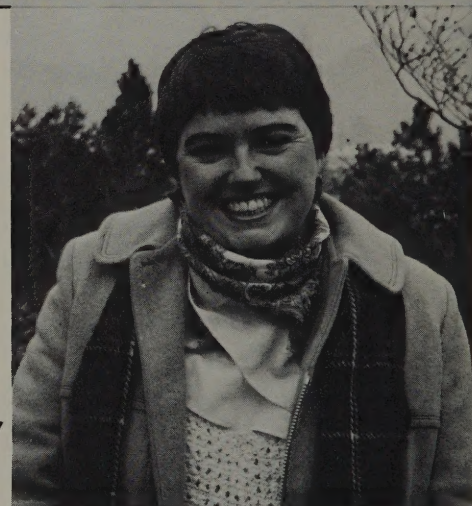
Donna Kampen Entz, and her husband, Loren, are currently on furlough from Burkina Faso in West Africa where they are part of AIMM's church planting team. They are supported by the General Conference COM. Donna is from Fiske Mennonite Church, Fiske, Saskatchewan.

Dr. Dennis Ries served in Zaire for eight years. He was Medical Director at the Kalonda hospital which is operated by the Mennonite Church of Zaire. The Ries' presently make their home in Freeman, South Dakota.

Tina Bohn with her husband, John, relate to African Independent Churches through community development in Tabola, Lesotho. They are sponsored on the AIMM team by the General Conference COM.

Tim Bertsche, with his wife Laura, lives in Kalonda, Zaire where he is an instructor at the Bible Institute. The Bertsches are members of the Grace Church, Morton, IL and are supported on the AIMM team by the Evangelical Mennonite Church Commission on Overseas Missions.

IN LANGUAGE STUDY



Lois Braun left in January for language study at Le Chambon, France as her first step to an assignment in Zaire. Lois will use her interests in sewing, cooking, nutrition and music in her work with the girls school, the Lycee Miodi, at Nyanga. A graduate of the University of Manitoba with a major in Home Economics and the University of British Columbia where she received her teaching certificate, Lois also attended Capernwray Bible School in Germany. She is the daughter of Ben and Katie Braun of Winnipeg. Lois is a member of the General Conference Mountainview Mennonite Church of Vancouver, B.C. She is sponsored on the AIMM team by the Commission on Overseas Mission of the General Conference Mennonite Church.



Procession through Mahalapye Rev. Dabutha, l., Rev. Mohono, r.

Botswana youth fest

What a weekend! Two hundred young people from twenty African Spiritual Church groups descended on Mahalapye for *Bopaganang '85*. The young singing marchers in colorful uniforms represented a magnificent celebration of faith. It was the first inter-church youth festival of its kind in Botswana.

The September weekend was filled with choirs and musical groups, question and answer sessions, a vigorous Bible-knowledge quiz in which the women's side trounced the men, a late-night musical event, the Sunday morning procession and a tree-planting ceremony in the public square. Rev. Samuel A. Mohono was speaker and resource person. Botswana's Minister of Home Affairs, Mr. Englishman Kgabo, opened the gathering which was held at the Spiritual Healing Church center.

Rev. Mohono's presence was somewhat of a miracle itself. When telephone connections were not able to be worked out between Botswana and Lesotho to inform Mr. Mohono of air travel arrangements, Botswana missionaries telephoned AIMM's Elkhart office which in turn phoned Lesotho with the message. The confirmation then was returned via Indiana as well.



Bible Knowledge quiz

Tree planting ceremony, Rev. Oswald Ditsheko, r



AIMM personnel assisted national church leaders with planning and arrangements. Jonathan Larson wrote, "The youth festival is now history. It was a miracle that it happened at all. When it was all over we were a little breathless. I suppose that this is the start of something which will become a significant element in the Spiritual Church scene, a rare meeting ground for those who are going to lead these churches in the next decade."

Other AIMM'ers involved were Henry Unrau and his gospel musicians called the "Gabriel Band" and Irvin Friesen who spoke at the lively Sunday worship service.

Participants raised nearly 600 Pula (approximately \$350.) for expenses. This allowed enough of a balance to enable planning to begin for a festival next year.

In Botswana, Africa Inter-Mennonite Mission and Mennonite Central Committee personnel work together with a shared administration under an umbrella called "Mennonite Ministries."

from a report by Jonathan Larson



Old Mupende carving



Surgery at Kalonda hospital

Contrasting Concepts

by Dr. Makina A. Nganga

WESTERN AND AFRICAN HEALING

Modern western medicine is a compound product of thousands of years of civilization. Asian, African, European, and American people have all contributed to the progress of medicine in many ways.

But the scientific medicine as we know it today has been developing since last century as progress is being achieved in histology, physiology, bacteriology, biology, chemistry, physics, and in other basic sciences. Disease is no longer attributed to miasma or other divine displeasure. Illness is considered as a "deviance from the capacity to perform expected tasks and roles, if this deviance is involuntary."¹

*an abridged edition of
the paper presented
to the AIMM Board
October 20, 1984
at Grabill, Indiana*

Science tries to explain *how* diseases occur. Generally, the causes of diseases are either in the man (i.e. genetic disorders or biological inadaptation) or in the environment (i.e. bacteria).

Is there any opportunity for integrating the traditional African practices into the new system of medicine?

The contemporary knowledge and technologies of African healers may appear less developed when compared to those in western medicine. Reasons for such notable stagnation are not clear. The lack of writing may be incriminated as one of the most influential causes. Only written elements allow better references, comparisons, and discussion with the past. A second reason would be the secrecy observed by the practitioners who collect and handle remedies in such a way that nobody other than the healer himself can guess what is happening. A famous philosopher said that the death of an African elder is "fire put to a library."

In fact, the role of oral tradition has been overestimated. It is not a popular but a clannish affair for the initiated only. Ordinary people do not have access to the sophisticated technologies of the highest initiated.

A third reason is a lack of support given to traditional medicine during the colonial era. Containers of remedies, remedies themselves, amulets, statues and some sculptures were considered as fetishes. Such controversial containers were leaves, animal's horns, traditional velvet, snails' and turtles' shells, potteries, and gourds.

In traditional medicine in Africa, what is an illness and where does it come from? Who is the healer? Is it possible to work with him?

Henry Sigerist, defining illness in a traditional society, wrote: "Here we encounter probably the two oldest and basic concepts of diseases, namely the view that disease is a 'plus' or a 'minus', a 'too-much' or a 'not-enough.' Man is sick because something has been removed from his organism."²

In African traditional views there are three kinds of ailments: the first are *natural*, the second are due to *witchcraft*, and the third are due to *ancestral ghosts* and other *evil spirits*.

Natural ailments are mild or moderate, harmless and passing. They are considered helpful to an individual's health. This implies a vague notion of immunity. If any treatment is needed, it may be provided by the patient himself or a family member. Interpretations are clear and related to a physical event. For example a headache is attributed to an excess of drinking or crying. Healing is rapid without complication. Thus, the prognosis of natural ailment is very good.

Witchcraft-related ailments are the most fearsome. Sigerist wrote: "A man makes another individual sick by introducing magically a foreign object into the victim's body or by removing magically a vital part from it. An individual is suddenly stricken with illness and knows that an object has been shot into his body. This object may be anything from a small pebble, a bit of straw, leather, earth, coal, a piece of quartz, glass, a splinter of wood, a bean, a fish bone, or a shell, to an insect, a worm or another small animal . . ."³

To this long list other conditions may be added: snake bite, supernatural burns, drowning and lightning.

Ailments due to ghosts are basically rites-related. Ancestors have a reputation of being comprehensive. Once a rite is observed properly the patient will recover his health.

Normally a transgression of some kind is a necessary condition to become sick by witchcraft or evil spirits. These conditions can be: disrespect to elderly, refusal to share goods, adultery, carelessness to fulfill certain rites as a sacrifice to ancestors or delays in enthroning a chief.

Once an individual is seriously ill, a scheme has to be followed; otherwise, he will die. First, the cause has to be determined: natural, witchcraft or evil spirit. Then the sorcerer or the evil spirit must be given some fee so that he



Medical technician, Kalonda

will permit a healing process. Afterwards, the family (including the ancestors) must be reconciled. And finally they either make their way to the hospital or to the healer.

Probably, the healer's knowledge of anatomy and physiology is poor. Veins, arteries, nerves and tendons are called indistinctly *mishiya* (Gipende), *mijilu* (Tshiluba), *misisa* (Lingala, Kikongo).⁴ Though without a specific description, all parts of the body have a designation. For example, all fingers have a name in Gipende but the first finger is the fifth in English.

The healer may be an *herbalist*, an *herbalist-ritualist*, or a *ritualist-spiritualist*. Each of them may practice surgery such as circumcision, abscess incision, fracture reduction and contention, or extraction of foreign objects as bullets. There is no anesthesia. Midwives attend births, perform breech extraction, and handle the placenta which is considered as a "second child."

Healing is a noble art. Once the healer is elderly or approaches death, he finally decides to pass on his/her technologies. The heir, usually a family member or friend, is deemed obedient and respectable. The heir pays some fee such as a chicken, goat, or sheep. (Other people say they have dreamt their art. While sleeping the ancestors come to show him which herbs to select.) As stated earlier, some famous healers die without saying anything about their power.

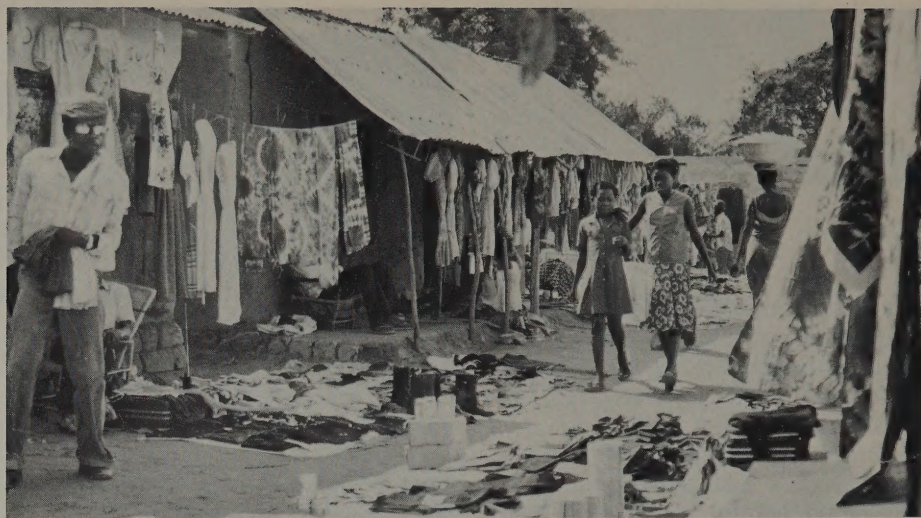
In *herbalism* the healer is at the same time botanist, pharmacist and doctor. Remedies are made of leaves, bark and roots of plants. Parts of animals (white and red clay) or animals may be added. The effectiveness of remedies depends upon the parts collected, the time of collection (dawn, noon or dusk), and the healer's own power which passes through the remedies. He makes potions, powder, ashes or vapor. Administration is in the form of inhalation, nose, eye or ear-drops, beverage, food preparation, baths, massage, scarification, incision, suction, emetic, enema and suppositories. Sometimes it requires that an uncircumcised boy, a virgin girl, or a twin's mother collect the plant that it be given special kind of power. Usually a healer prescribes some eating or behavioral taboos.

The *herbalist-ritualist* deals with both herbs and rites, but treatment is more metaphysical. As an example, among the Khita people on the Kimbanda river, a woman with secondary sterility or habitual miscarriages is isolated in a newly built hut. She is given new utensils, remedies, and a special diet. Except for the healer, her husband, and three or four elderly and initiated women, nobody else can see her. She goes to the river between 3 and 4 a.m. and brings home her own water. After a few months she will become pregnant. A colorful ceremony of rites is held to release her.

continued on next page

The *ritualist-spiritualist* is basically a diviner. His methods of diagnosis and treatment are metaphysical using special incantation. He guesses the categories of illness and may know the name of the sorcerer. He makes long-distance communications with mysterious "phones," flies with mysterious "planes," and works in friendship with a sorcerer. The latter makes people sick and the spiritualist (spiritist) cares for them. Both of them share the fees paid by the patient. The spiritist is the provider of amulets and fetishes which protect against witchcraft. To him protective amulets have the same meaning and value as immunization.

These beliefs and practices exist today. One must consider them while leading evangelistic and health programs. Such programs will succeed only if the people accept new ideas, change, and abandon their former habits. That is what the Bible calls "conversion" or "to be born again." Both assimilation and accommodation are necessary for a newly introduced idea in a society. Other outcomes will be poor such as having only formal or nominal Christians or, in health, having latrines built but not used.



Zaire market place, Tshikapa

The World Health Organization has recommended the reevaluation of traditional medicine. Most experts say that African nations are too poor to maintain a certain level of health care. A nation's health service is correlated to the other sectors such as agriculture, economics, finance, transportation, education, communication and so on. Furthermore, these countries have neither required foreign currencies for importing drugs nor a sufficient number of health personnel. Meanwhile their populations are growing rapidly. As these conditions are becoming worse each year utilization of native resources has been proposed as one of the most feasible solutions.

In the health field we have to consider the raw material, eliminate the coating, and preserve the useful product. Thus, spiritism and ritualism can be eliminated from an integrated program as there is no way to bring that metaphysical phenomena into a scientific system. On the other hand, I do not find any major obstacle to the integration of herbalism. As an example, many African people believe

that fractures heal faster if treated traditionally. Here the experiment would be an easy one. It would only require weekly comparative radiographic studies. Unfortunately, traditional healers are unwilling to let their patients have X-rays done. Herbalists are blameworthy for not knowing both active ingredients and exact dose and for being less hygienic.

Durenda Nash Ojanuga reports that "in Nigeria, traditional practitioners had a positive attitude towards co-operation with medical doctors and they were willing to make certain changes to so. In terms of therapy, however, traditional doctors felt their methods were superior, and they were reluctant to transfer patients."³

To me, their integration is complicated only if one expects them to supplement the lack of health personnel. In that event they will have to undergo a basic training in anatomy, physiology, toxicology and hygiene. But apart from this, it is most important to study their methods and herbs and to let them know the limits to their competence, so that they will be willing to refer patients to competent service.

Dr. Makina A. Nanga

FOOTNOTES

- ¹.Paul F. Basch, *International Health* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978) p. 136
- ².H. Sigerist, *A History of Medicine* (Oxford University Press, 1951) p. 128
- ³.H. Sigerist, op. cit. p. 128
- ⁴.A. Yangni-Angate, "Understanding Traditional Medicine," *World Health Forum*, 2(2) (1981) pp. 240-241
- ⁵.Durenda Nash, Ojanuga, "What Doctors Think of Traditional Healers—and Vice Versa," *World Health Forum*, 2(3) (1981) p. 409



Dr. Makina and his wife, Kasanji

condensed and edited by Robert Gerhart

God has removed my anger

Ntate John, his wife, and I climbed into the pickup truck. I smiled at Harlan and the kids as they hopped in the back. After awhile John said, "You know I was ready to give up on life. I had so much hatred for white people that I was ready to join an underground military group that promised to subvert and destroy white people and their dominance over black Africans.

"I wrote a letter to a friend telling him of my despair and frustration. I also told him of my plans to run away and join this army. He replied immediately and told me to come to Durban to visit with him first. This friend was a Christian and he took me to a Billy Graham rally. I knew that I was so lost and confused, not to mention bitter and so full of hatred. That night I became a Christian. I did not stand up like the others, but in my heart I stood up for God to see. In truth, my life has never been the same.

"It has been a long time since I became a Christian. God has removed my anger and hatred for whites. In fact I have many white Christian friends and I have learned the meaning of forgiveness. Life is still very difficult, but I have a goal and joy now to know Jesus. We'll work together you and I as friends. You know since I am a Christian I no longer believe in war and violence. I see this in Jesus' teachings, we must work for peace."

We continued driving down the steep, winding, bumpy road in silence. The sun loomed larger than life, brilliant and intense. Small herds of goats grazed and frolicked along the escarpments. The children and Harlan were lounging on top of huge sacks of cabbages in the back of the truck with several other folk from the village. We were all covered with a very fine film of dust and the children laughed as we hit each bump, arms and legs flailing.

Ntate John began to talk again. This time he told me of a young shepherd boy who had fallen from one of these mountain cliffs and died before they could get him to the hospital many hours away. We continued talking and sharing as we slowly picked our way down from the mountains to the valley below. The sun, like a giant snail, slipped behind the mountains as we left huge swirling clouds of dust behind us.



Claire deBrun

Lesotho valleys



Phillipe Coulibale and Marté Tiera

FAITHFUL AS A FAMILY

Marté was embarrassed to say it but she shyly confessed to others attending the women's seminar, "There is real love in our home." In her Burkina Faso setting, that love is evident and people are learning to know Christ because of it.

Marté Tiera and her husband, Philip Coulibale, are faithfully sharing their love for Christ in the village of Djigouera, a bumpy hour's drive north of Orodara. Both were born in ethnic Bobo villages in Mali, just north of the Burkina Faso border.

Philip was raised as an orphan in the home of relatives. The family were fetish worshippers but Philip somehow evaded such worship. The Christian and Missionary Alliance church was strong in that area and Philip became highly interested in Christianity. He studied diligently to learn the Bambara trade language in which the Bible was translated. He enjoyed the Bible stories so much. Philip chose to follow Christ and was baptized as a young teenager.

Through problems in the church, interest waned and many people left but Philip and several other friends continued to attend the local church faithfully.

Marté enjoyed several years of formal French education during her childhood. When Marté and Philip's marriage was being arranged by their families, she made her own commitment to Christ and was baptized.

After the birth of their first child, relationships with Philip's family became strained. Philip's brother wanted him to work on Sunday which Philip thought was wrong to do. Finally he, Marté and their little baby set off to look for farm land in Burkina Faso. They lived in several areas, often isolated from other Believers and remote from other

people. This was a time of maturing in their faith in the Lord.

Marté remembers how the other women ridiculed her for not sneaking grain out of the family granary as they did. A woman could sell the pilfered grain for profit to buy nice clothes or dishes for herself. But Marté felt the Lord helped her to say no to such deeds which would have brought disharmony and food shortages to her own family. The Lord Himself was teaching her to be a Christian wife and mother. In her own tribe field work was man's work. She remembered how her mother would sit at home doing nothing while her father slaved in the field. So whenever she had time and the girls could help with housework, she went to the fields to help her husband, Philip, especially with the big job of weeding.

It was during a time when they lived without other Christians nearby that their daughter, Deborah, became seriously ill. She had a very high fever and partial paralysis. They suspected polio but medical help was far away. Nor was there money for a doctor. So they prayed many times a day. Neighbors made fun of them because they didn't try to obtain traditional African medicine. Philip and Marté said, "God can heal and He will heal Deborah too, if that is the way it is to be."

They carried Deborah out to the field and laid her under a shade tree when they had to cultivate the field. Slowly, after several days she regained control of her muscles. But then they discovered the girl was blind for awhile. By then they knew that God was helping them and their daughter regained full use of her eyes. Since this time they tell how God is their only and best doctor. Their health record has been better than for many people who go for medical help.



Marté with children in worship at Djiguera

A Burkina Faso Testimony

by Donna Kampen Entz

Several years ago they felt they needed to move on. Their intended move to their present home was confirmed for Marté in a dream. She had not been anxious for another move. But they moved onto new land about thirty-five kilometers (21 miles) north of Orodara. They settled much like homesteaders. But first they built a grass shelter as a church building. Then they constructed a house to sleep in.

Philip only had one bullock to use as a draft animal to help with the cultivating. Two were needed to pull a plow. They bought a second on credit but both animals died of sickness shortly thereafter. So there they were, back to cultivating with a short-handled hoe, doubled over, trying to grow enough crops for the year's supply of food and to pay off debts. The rains were not abundant. As a result food has been short. Yet they continue to welcome anyone and everyone to their home, sharing abundantly of their meagre resources.

Philip and Marté have had a great impact on their little bush community. Their neighbors are also people who have left their previous homes for varied reasons to settle here. Several have now made commitments to Christ through the hospitality of Philip and Marté. Some come to join Marté and Philip around the fire after dark for food, singing and testimonies as the family shares its life together.

During the days Marté's teenage daughters work beside their mother, learning to do all the hard tasks of living in the bush. They grind flour on the stone, pound grain in the mortar, extract oil from a nut, and collect baobab leaves from the trees to make a nutritious gravy. They must work very hard and yet are grateful for the good food they have. Marté has taught Mariam, the oldest girl, to read in the trade language so she can read the Bible herself.

Philip, with the help of a nephew and a younger son, cultivates more land than most of the neighbors. It is all done by hand. Beside the lack of rain, agriculture is made difficult by chicken hawks which are a constant threat to baby chicks, monkeys that steal the corn, and squirrels that find the peanuts. But worst of all, the staple crop, sorghum, is always attacked by flocks of birds shortly before the grain is ripe.

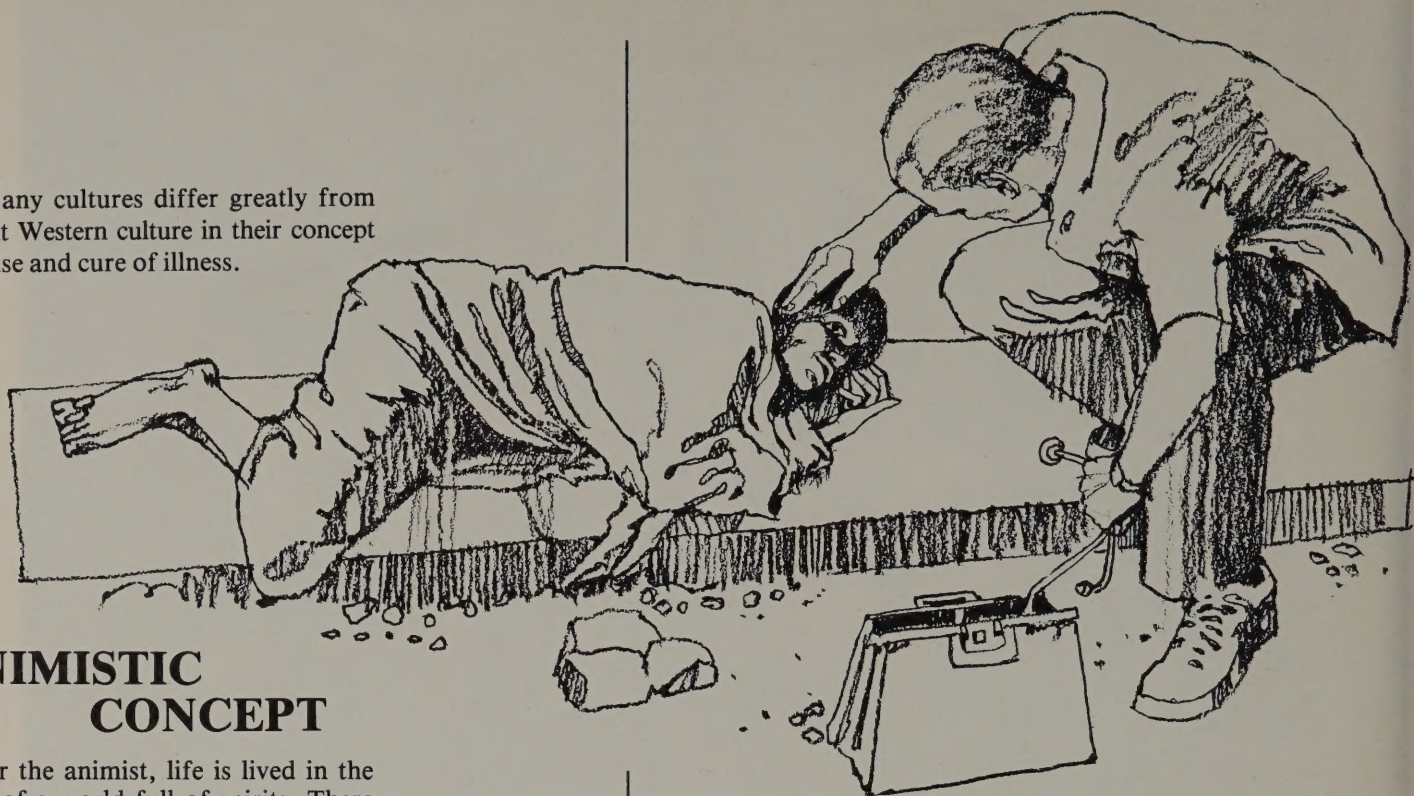
Marté recently received tragic word from her home village. Her younger brother had committed suicide because of fighting with his second wife in a polygamous society. He had still been single when Marté last saw her family. The separation of distance was very hard as she struggled through this grief.

Philip and Marté are excited because they know that only Christ can build a church that brings together people of several ethnic groups and makes them one. Philip says, "When I first moved to this area I thought God would build His church with Bobo people. We would worship in the Bobo language. But now we don't even sing Bobo songs in the church anymore. Our worship is in a common trade language because God is bringing people of various ethnic groups to us."

Three different ethnic groups have joined the fellowship of this Bobo family: Senefou, Mossi and Toussian. There is also an interested Siamou person. The little congregation receives regular visits and counsel from missionaries of the Africa Inter-Mennonite Mission living at Orodara.

Philip knows there is better land elsewhere. He is often tempted to move on to an easier place but he feels God has called him to this specific area to be a witness to the many "unreached tribes." For Philip and Marté their Christian commitment includes "as you do make disciples . . ."

Many cultures differ greatly from current Western culture in their concept of cause and cure of illness.



ANIMISTIC CONCEPT

For the animist, life is lived in the midst of a world full of spirits. There are generally four recognized categories of spiritual beings: a supreme God, numerous lesser divinities and spirits, spirits and evil spirits. In some cultures, a guardian spirit would also be included. Spirits' activities can be good or bad, or just "imp-like."

Many animistic religions do exhibit belief in a supreme god, but the effect of this belief is negligible because such a god is viewed as a very impersonal force, who is aloof and not concerned nor involved with a human's daily existence. There may sometimes be a fear of god, but not a love.

In contrast, animists' lives are extensively ordered around the placation of the spirit world. They believe that all physical phenomenon are the doings of the spirit world. If they are happy, there is harmony in nature. If they are unhappy, there is disharmony such as sickness or famine. Humans' efforts must be constantly directed toward pleasing the spirits. This assumes that the spirits' activities and temperament can be influenced. Indeed, the common belief is that the relationship between humans and spirits is complementary. Humans need the spirits to keep their lives and world in order; to send rain, to insure good crops, to maintain fertility and health. Simultaneously, the spirits need humans as their vehicle of expression, and to feed, shelter, and humor them. The goal is order between the human and spirit world, and either party can upset this order.

SIN AND SICKNESS

abridged excerpts from a paper

by Dr. Dennis Ries

This relationship can become very manipulative. Taboos cannot be taken lightly, but humans seem to have the right to employ their cleverest means of satisfying the spirits. To manipulate the spirit is good, but to ignore the taboo would be dangerous.

The realm of sorcery concerns the human manipulation of spirits. Such manipulation may be of three types: productive, protective, or destructive. An example of productive sorcery to some is to spit pepper seeds in the field as rice is planted, in order to please the spirits to insure a bountiful yield. Protective sorcery is commonly understood as charms. Such objects can be used to cast anti-sorcery spells to counterbalance bad medicine. Finally, sorcery may be destructive, soliciting spirits to do another harm. Among the Bena Lulua of Zaire, this occurs rarely between strangers, but usually within members of the extended family.

The animistic view of sickness is based in the spirit world as instigated by human intervention. Two elements, spiritual and social are usually both involved. A basic view is that a strong soul equals health and a weak soul equals sickness. One's aim is therefore always to increase soul power by good behavior, obedience to social rules, rites, and sacrifices.

All illness in the animistic concept requires answering questions which the scientific world does not even pose. Who did it? Why is it I who suffer? An accident in the sense of a meaningless, unexplainable suffering, or one without a reason cannot exist. Every illness demands an answer. One may know the cause of malaria, but animism requires knowing why the mosquito bit me instead of you. The answer is to be found in the victim's past conflicts or sins of his own or of his family. The strain in family relationships provoked by searching for the answer is far reaching indeed.

The therapy of sin and sickness in the animistic view is very similar. Both involve elements of eliciting guilt and then determining and executing the restitution.

The basis of treatment for sin is confession. No progress toward restoring harmony can be hoped for without it. Confession is the means to restore social and moral equilibrium. Confession is necessary to stop the evil events set in motion, through sorcery and witchcraft. Confession serves to restore proper relationship with the supernatural. Confession is the key to restoring health. Confession in this context does not include, nor even search for, a change in heart attitude.

Usually, confession involves the intervention of a diviner. His role is to search for the cause of the ill fortune, and once having found it, to set the price and means of restitution.

Animistic therapy for illness is an increasingly syncretistic therapy due to the pervasive invasion of Western medicine into nearly all societies.

The diviner's therapy for illness involves several steps. He must determine the behavior deviation which was the cause of the illness. This is determined by divination and interview of the sufferer or clan members. The next step is to elicit the guilt or fix the responsibility. The response is confession. The diviner's third task is to propose the means for social reconciliation. It is only after all this has been done, that treatment begins, with the use of secondary means such as herbs, powders, fetishes, and sacrifices. Though certain parts of the diviner's work may be conducted in secret, it is a very social process. His entire intervention is based in the common faith of the community. Community members are often present and participate in fact finding, reconciliation, ritual, singing and dancing.



JUDAEO-CHRISTIAN CONCEPT

In the Biblical concept of sin and sickness, it is strikingly evident that sickness is firmly related to sin.

But the Judaeo-Christian understanding of God and sin is unique. It understands God as a personal being, concerned with the smallest details of human life. God is love and Jesus is the "Great Physician." His first desire is therefore our health. But then the question becomes, from whence comes sickness? The answer is that this God is not only loving, but also just, and if just, He must punish disobedience of His laws.

The consequences of disobedience to some of the covenant laws are obvious even today. The sixth commandment, proscribes the antithesis of health, that is death, by forbidding murder. Though modern science is impotent in curbing venereal disease, God's seventh commandment gives the most effective and simple solution, "Do not commit adultery." Other covenant commandments include Lev. 19:18 which commands, "Love your neighbor as yourself." If this command were truly followed, the change of life in this world would be difficult to imagine. But the ulcers and hypertension resulting from living in hate and competition are truly endemic.

In moving from the Covenant of Jehovah with His chosen people to His New Covenant for all, the therapy for sin changes after the propitiatory sacrifice, and confession of sin become the new central elements for forgiveness.

The New Testament Judaeo-Christian community reaction to sickness was basically a continuation of the Old Testament concept: it was a consequence of sin, either of the sufferer or his parents. Jesus introduces a new concept of sickness being unrelated to sin. This is his response to his disciples' question of whose sin caused the man to be born blind. Yet at the occasion of healing (the paralytic at the Pool of Bethesda) Jesus suggests precisely the opposite idea with his parting instruction, "Sin no more that nothing worse befall you."

With this diversity of concepts of origins of sickness in the New Testament, sufferer's sin, parents' sin, or no sin, it is understandable that New Testament therapy for sickness is very variable. Healing by Jesus himself was informal, non-ritualized, without fetish—simply miraculous. It permits no conclusion of a consistent formula. Concerning the sometimes suggested prerequisite of faith or belief in the healer or his power, it cannot be consistently demonstrated, but is at least the most consistently indicated element in Jesus' healing.

In James 5 is found a clear instruction for healing. It involved four elements: the sufferer was to call for help from the spiritual leaders in the church; these elders were to perform a healing ritual; they were to pray for him; they were to anoint him with olive oil; this ritual was to be performed in the name of the Lord. This prayer in faith was promised to heal the sick person, and also results in forgiveness of his sins. It involves a ritual consisting of prayer and anointing. It is also at the initiation of the sufferer. Clearly it is not the elders, but God who accomplishes the healing. But then, Jesus adds a fifth element for healing, that of confession. "So then confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, so that you will be healed." It is clearly included as a significant element in therapy of sickness.

In response to an ill-defined illness among Corinthian Christians, consisting of weakness and occasional death, Paul's diagnosis of the cause is a dishonorable attitude and practice of communion observance which he labels as sin. His therapy is to examine one's self morally and reform before participating in the communion ritual.

Another therapy of sickness is suggested by Paul to a colleague, Timothy, who apparently suffered from chronic indigestion. With no other elaboration, this would seem to be a purely medicinal form of therapy. Paul implicated no causes for this ailment, and proposed what was probably accepted aid to digestion—a purely chemical therapy. One can conclude that the Judaeo-Christian concept embraces a wide range of therapeutic models.

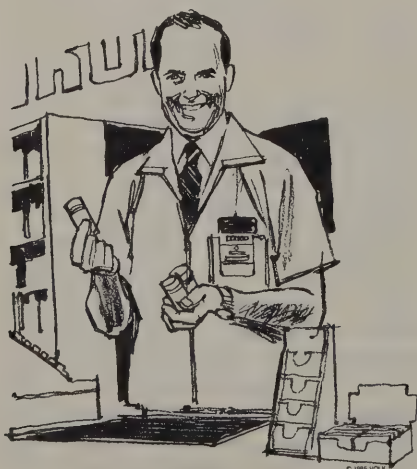
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MODERN WESTERN CONCEPT

The modern Western concept of sin is unique. It denies the existence of sin. Therefore, there exists no discussion concerning its therapy. Sickness is seen as an amoral condition. It is unrelated to sin and guilt, therefore its therapy is also strictly amoral. This popular concept permits no therapy of guilt—only suppression. The sufferer is told that guilt is not real. It is but a figment of the imagination.

In western medicine disease is individual. Traditionally, consultation involves only the doctor and the patient. No other members of family, clan, or society are included.

Sickness is viewed as of the body, not of the soul. It is biochemical and physiologic, identifiable in objective, precise, technically measurable ways. The modern Western concept of sickness seems to be changing. The past concept of health was the absence of well-being, mental, physical, and social. Health care personnel are slowly modifying their too simplistic concept. Today, wholistic medicine is a contradictory thrust in medicine. Its basic tenant is that sickness, and therapy of it, involves body, soul, and spirit. It seeks to complement and complete scientific chemical treatment with other approaches to therapy of soul and spirit.



THE MISSIONARY DOCTOR

How can a Western Christian missionary doctor be most effective as a healer?

First, as a Christian missionary he accepts the Judaeo-Christian concept of sin as a reality for all people. But the acceptance of sin as a possible factor in illness of his patients is rarely considered except in a very general way, as aging and death are the ultimate results of original sin. In actual practice, his therapeutic approach is limited to that of his scientific medical training.

Secondly, he becomes a victim of demands versus time. Thus to provide anything but the most time efficient therapy is a difficult decision. So, whether counselling, prayer, education, or any other time consuming therapy is indicated, the most attractive therapy will always be the fastest, that is almost always the writing of prescription for some Western medicine.

Thirdly, he faces the great handicap of ignorance of the local culture. Only a most intense effort over many years' time will provide him sufficient cultural understanding to permit valid diagnosis and effective therapy of psychological, mental, and moral problems. Consequently, he wants to limit himself to therapy of that which he understands—physical illness only.

Fourthly, his medical training is essentially silent concerning the soul of man, and thus he knows virtually nothing of treatment of the soul. So in practice, as in his training, the result is that only the body, physical ailments, are considered in therapy. What he knows of spirit and soul from his Christian belief is insufficient for diagnostic and therapeutic approach to problems of the human soul; furthermore, the fragmentary notions that he has received from these two concepts are probably contradictory. His medical training has likely denied the relevance of sin and guilt.

Finally, he believes in miracles, but has identified them rarely, if at all, in his practice. The reality of rarity of his God's miraculous intervention makes him prefer to content himself with usual Western medical therapy, rather than invoke his God and his religion in his patient care, except perhaps in private prayer or very general public prayer.

Can a missionary doctor become a more effective healer? A basic step is to recognize that the cause of illness differs. It ranges from idiopathic (no sin) to ignorance, such as worm infestation, to parents' sin, such as child neglect and malnutrition, to specific sin, such as adultery resulting in venereal disease. If one is able to separate illness involving sin and guilt from all others, one can better concentrate on, and tailor the unique elements of therapy for the sin-related sickness. For sickness not known to involve sin and guilt, the physician can logically continue to utilize his modern Western therapeutic approach with confidence of good success.

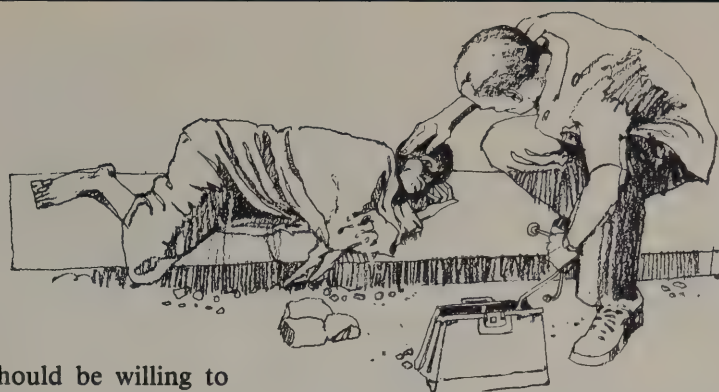
So how can sin and guilt be diagnosed and managed in a sick patient? It is usually difficult, and should not be suggested routinely to all patients as a basic screening procedure because of the excessive tendency among animistic people to suspect sorcery in all sickness for which they do not know another cause. With increased understanding of health and physiologic causes of sickness, increasing numbers of people do not first ask, "Who did it?" but rather, "Did someone do this?" This is a trend which physicians should encourage.



When then should a doctor search to recognize sin, guilt, or sorcery as a cause of one's sickness? Three categories are most likely involved. First, psychiatric illness is a frequent manifestation of sorcery or guilt. People literally often "go crazy" when they discover that they have been "hexed." And many, with neuroses, harbor festering unresolved guilty consciences as a primary causative factor in their illnesses. Secondly, one should pursue the possibility in patients with medically unexplainable chronic illness. Thirdly, it should be searched when normal medical treatment unexpectedly fails. As one understands increasingly the important relationship between physical and emotional health, it becomes obvious that unresolved emotional problems, such as guilt and fear, may seriously hinder physical well being.

The methods may vary. The doctor may pose appropriate questions, direct and indirect, to the patient and to family members. He may suggest that something seems to be hindering recovery. He may solicit aid from staff members who may better understand the patient. They may have heard significant information from outside the hospital setting. He may ask whether the patient has problems with some relative, or if he has any unresolved conflict with another.

One should distinguish between the Christian and non-Christian patient. If a Christian is found to have a sin-related illness, the physician may discuss the Biblical recognition of the relationship between sin and sickness, the concept of Jesus as the greatest physician, and the church's charge to be involved in healing. With a non-Christian, one can begin with the patient's own concept of wrong or shame, pursuing the need of confession and restitution which are commonly accepted. Then suggestion of the Holy Spirit as the strongest spirit, and Christ as the greatest physician, may be fruitful in encouraging eventual repentance and conversion.



The physician should be willing to take an active role in facilitation of confession and restitution. In the role of an intermediary confessor and physician become the equivalent of the diviner. Thus the physician can offer a prayer for forgiveness on behalf of the patient, even praying for a permanent conversion. This way, the physician begins to make Christianity relevant to sickness in a way that may supplant the traditional diviner and animistic thought and power. If the physician fails to achieve this, he will continue to see patients secretly leave his hospital when a patient's recovery is too slow, in order to seek the more potent cures of animism via its diviner. The confession which the physician can facilitate is only initial and incomplete, however. It cannot satisfy the social or communal requirements for forgiveness. For this, he will need the participation of the extended family and or the church. Confession must be open (public), specific, and complete. The audience must be appropriate, with the goal of forgiveness rather than reveling in the details of sin.

The development of a healing context is important. This means the patient senses that he is where healing occurs, and thus expects it to occur. Others speak of it as the power of positive thinking or the placebo effect, but it is real.

In all of this—confession, restitution, and therapy, the physician should encourage the communal participation of family, clan, and church. This is not only natural but necessary in animistic thought. Simply stated, nothing important happens individually—only in community.

To counter the prevalent idea that the Creator-God is too distant to be concerned with human problems, the missionary doctor must teach that God is love and does care for each one. He should also emphasize to those of faith, that God is powerful and therefore a potential protection against the lesser spirits.

Another way in which a missionary doctor can become more effective is to always be a health teacher. This should be his constant task. Ignorance fuels sorcery because sorcery is an evil which cannot be disproved. It is a convenient, ready answer, whenever another explanation is lacking. Thus all health educators must take the offensive, in providing ready answers to the "Why" question. As people see more certainly they will have less need to invoke sorcery in illness.

The physician can cautiously encourage local herbal medicine. Cautiously, because it must be done only as people are able to disassociate its use from witchcraft. One can sensitize people to distinguish between the two elements. Everyone employs their own "home remedies" to some extent, never associating it with witchcraft, and with explanation this can be enlarged and encouraged. Incorporation of herbal medical treatment into modern Western medicine is desirable because of availability at decreased cost. The use of herbal medicine without associated magical incantations could be a desirable improvement in health care.

Finally, a physician should search to address basic social problems which so often creates illness. Lack of enforced city sanitation codes, unhindered prostitution, corrupt judicial systems, obstructed agricultural development, and policies which impoverish the local population are but a few examples which work against the health of the people.

While the modern Western world has much medical truth to share with the world it also exhibits a serious blind spot—the non-physical, non-microbial factors in disease and the effective treatment and prevention of them. If the missionary doctor is willing to learn from other cultures, where their expertise exceeds his own, one can hope for truly effective comprehensive health care.



Dr. Dennis Ries

Dr. Dennis Ries

edited by Robert Gerhart



Dolls made for village day care center

Lesotho Loveables by Tina Bohn

Several weeks ago 'Me Monyatsi, the wife of the Koalabata AIC pastor, was telling me about the "creche" (day-nursery) she was going to start in the church building near their home. For several years only the walls of the church had been standing. Now it had a roof as well as windows and doors. She said there are women in the village who are working and have small children who need to be cared for while the mothers are away. I asked if she had some equipment and she said she had no toys, nothing for the children to play with. She then asked me to give her some toys which she could use in the creche. I reminded her that I had no children whose used toys I could give her. I also did not feel right about just going to the shops and buying toys for the creche. I had an idea "Why not teach the women in the village to make some rag dolls?" I suggested this to 'Me Monyatsi telling her I would bring all the materials including a pattern which was simple and produced easy-to-make lovable dolls, but I wanted the women to help make them. She excitedly agreed.

The next time I saw 'Me Monyatsi she reminded me that I had not yet come for the doll-making. She had told the children they would be getting dolls to play with and each day they would ask "Where are our dolls?" We set a date and I began to cut out dolls and their clothes in preparation for the doll manufacturing day.

On the day we had agreed to meet I loaded my car with a box which included everything that would be needed, thread, needles, embroidery cotton, buttons, material for bodies and clothes, yarn to make hair and the stuffing which they had to cut into bits to fit into arms, legs, heads and bodies. I also took the two dolls which I had made some time earlier to show women what could be done with small pieces of material.

Eight women arrived and enthusiastically started to sew, not always being quite sure how all these pieces would fit together to make a doll. But soon the bodies of Thabo, Ntabiseng, Lukas, Mpho, Lerato, Jacobo and the others began to take shape. The features on their faces had to be embroidered and the women's artistic skills came to

the fore. Then after the head was attached to the body, arms and legs were sewn in their proper places. There were gales of laughter as they saw that Lukas' face, sewn on a bit crooked, gave him a coy and curious look. Mpho had one leg much thinner than the other. Jacobo's one eye much smaller than the other made him look as if he were flirting and they held him up saying he was winking at the girls. Lerato was the only girl doll to have a long flowing "page-boy" style hair. All the others had hair cropped short. Thabo was the first to don his blue striped trousers. "Smart looking," they said. When it was time for the women to go home, we had completed four dolls wearing clothes. The remaining four dolls were complete except for the clothes which still required some stitching.

It was a good opportunity to bring these women together, AIC, LEC and Catholic. All but two have a child attending the newly organized creche. The total cost of the dolls was a meter of material so that all their bodies could be a nice uniform chocolate brown. How I would have loved to have been a fly on the wall as the little ones came to creche on Monday morning!"



SEEING THE FRUIT

By Tim Bertsche



Housing for Bible Institute students

Being a young missionary serving an established church is not easy. It is often necessary to be quick to listen and slow to speak. It is easy to judge leadership decisions when the results demonstrate a less than mature wisdom. It is difficult to deal with criticism about "the way things were done in the early days of the mission."

Yet, we have the privilege of seeing the fruit of much labor done in those early days of the mission in the name of our Lord. There is fruit, sometimes unobserved during the drudgery of daily duties and often eclipsed by the frustration of tragic failures. But there is fruit and, just before Christmas, I had opportunity to witness the fruit from seeds planted long ago.

I was bouncing along a bumpy dirt road at 9 a.m., singing hymns in the back of a truck with thirty Zairian men and women. We were on our way to a local prison to hold a service for the inmates and provide them with a meal. Many Zaire prisons do not provide meals for their prisoners. Inmates rely on their family or relatives to bring them food. Our Bible Institute students at Kalonda have taken on this monthly ministry as part of their evangelistic outreach into the community. But this Sunday morning, just three days before Christmas, they had a special message to share.

The students had prepared a traditional meal of manioc mush and fish, which we promptly distributed to the hungry men. Two choirs had come along for the day, one composed of the student wives and the second, the young men. After the meal, they started the service with songs about Jesus the Christ Child who was born in Bethlehem. Madjau, a professor at our Bible Institute, read the Christmas story from Luke, chapter two. A young man from the choir shared his testimony explaining what Jesus meant to him. Two women read Scripture verses, testifying to the truth of God's word as they had experienced it. Wanga, the truck driver spoke to the men, challenging them to take Jesus as their personal Saviour during the Christmas season because in the New Year no one knew for sure what he or she would face. Kibunji, the Bible School director prayed for the men, asking that they would believe in their hearts what they had heard, and let Christ come into their lives to change them and help them prepare to live rightly when they would leave prison.

The service ended. Our group filed out, greeting and speaking briefly with the men. As I rode back along the dusty road, I realized that I had been an observer that morning. I had not preached God's word. No missionary had given a testimony. No white person had led the hymns. The service had been organized and was conducted by Zairian Christians. Lay people had proclaimed the Gospel and testified to their faith. The meal was prepared and given in love by students with very limited income. Young adults and mothers had communicated the message of Christmas by their music.

That is the way it should be, I thought. I had just seen the fruit of much labor. I had witnessed what earlier missionaries had worked, prayed and died for, Zairian Christians working to proclaim to others that abundant life they had received.

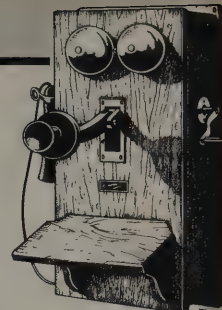
In the Mennonite Church in Zaire, the "reins" have been turned over to the Africans where they belong. As a new generation of young missionaries, we may not always agree with the direction of the driver, or the schedule of departure, or the speed of the cart. Our task is to love in our labors, witness by our presence, and encourage our Christian brothers and sisters as they build Christ's Church in Zaire.





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OUR th YEAR



Seventy-five years is a long time. For a teen, seventy-five years seems like ancient history. For those approaching the golden years it seems a far shorter period. And for a surprising number of our AIMM family seventy-five years ago is still within memory.

Seventy-five years ago Halley's Comet was big news. World Wars had not yet occurred; income tax had not yet been tried in the U.S.; aircraft was a novelty, and travel by dirigible airships was viewed as far more likely for the future. The *Titanic* had not yet sailed or sunk. Trolleys, not Interstates, connected Midwest communities. Church sheds had not yet given way to parking lots. And Mennonites were still more prone to separate over practices than to unite for ministry.

But a courageous group of men and women in Illinois, Indiana and Ohio had a vision for a world, concern for a distant Africa, and a conviction that people deprived of the Gospel had a far more critical need than simply lacking Western civilization. These rural folk chose eight men who formed a *Mennonite Missionary Alliance* in 1911 and today's AIMM was born. In 1912 they organized and adopted the name *Congo Inland Mission*.

Though representing two distinct Mennonite denominations these men chose to work together in their mission effort. From the start they were open to including and supporting others of like precious faith. And within the very first years missionaries from four Mennonite groups plus the Missionary Church were serving together. They were also open to internationalization and European and British Christians were included on the mission team.

Some have said that, until recent years at least, Mennonites could work together in service and material aid projects but not when theology and mission are involved. AIMM is a testimony to the contrary. In the Mennonite family, AIMM pioneered a partnership approach to missions. This united effort developed in the sending country from the beginning, not as an afterthought dictated by conditions on the field.

We enter our 75th year still very much committed to a co-operative venture in sharing the Gospel of Jesus Christ—planting the Church, nurturing the Church, and partnering with the Church in Africa today.

RWG



Together in ministry since 1912



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The Cover:

A member of the church band from an African Independent Church near Johannesburg at a celebration in Lesotho marking the 100th anniversary of the birth of early church leader, Walter Matitta Phakoe. See page 10.

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together in ministry...

Africa Inter-Mennonite Mission is a partnership of six denominations: the Evangelical Mennonite Church, the Evangelical Mennonite Brethren, the General Conference Mennonite Church, the Evangelical Mennonite Conference, the Mennonite Brethren, and the Evangelical Mennonite Mission Conference. AIMM has approximately eighty missionaries serving in five areas of Africa.



Appointed . . . Earl and Ruth Roth

The AIMM Board of Directors has appointed Rev. Earl Roth, AIMM missionary in Kinshasa, to be Executive Secretary effective September 1. He will succeed James Bertsche who is retiring on that date after twelve years in the Elkhart office. Earl will be the ninth Executive Secretary in AIMM's 75 year history. Earl and his wife, Ruth (Jantzen) have been sponsored under AIMM by the General Conference Commission on Overseas Mission since first going to Africa in 1955.

MARKETPLACE 29 A.D.

"Marketplace, 29 A.D." was the theme of the children's program during the Southern Africa Mennonite Workers Retreat hosted by Botswana's Mennonite Ministries' staff earlier this year. A New Testament-era village was recreated complete with the occupations of Jesus' time. Included were a weaver, minstrel, seamstress, beggar, ropemaker, rabbi, baker and persons in other roles. The children "lived" in tents and heard Jesus' stories in their original context. It was a super experience for both children and adults.

Naomi Unrau operating "bakery shop" during Marketplace 29 A.D.





Faithful Until He Comes

by Tokunboh Adeyemo

To the angel of the church in Smyrna write:

These are the words of Him who is the First and the Last, who died and came to life again. I know your afflictions and your poverty—yet you are rich! Do not be afraid of what you are about to suffer. Be faithful, even to the point of death, and I will give you the crown of life.

Revelation 2:8-10

Faithful witnesses can change the world. Moses changed the world of his day. As a faithful instrument mightily used by God, he changed the geo-economic, socio-political and spiritual destiny of his people—from slavery to sonship, from oppression to freedom, from repression to release, from captivity to Canaan, and from hopelessness to a joyful destiny! Moses was faithful in all his assigned ministry as a servant of God. God could trust him.

Like Moses but far greater is our Lord Jesus Christ. The Bible says that Jesus “was faithful to the one who appointed him,” for Moses was “faithful as a servant” but Christ “as a son”.

Faithfulness means trustworthiness. To be faithful is to be loyal to another person—true to fact and constant to one’s conviction. Our call is to be faithful until Christ returns. While the resurrection of Christ supplies the ground for our faith, the hope of his return has always motivated the church to get down to business. In Luke 19 Jesus tells the parable of a nobleman who went into a far country to receive a kingdom and to return. He called his ten servants together, gave them money and said, “Occupy till I come.” The Lord is saying to his church, “Occupy till I come!”

Are we faithfully occupying the world for Christ?

First and foremost the church is charged to confess Jesus Christ as Lord. This is a resurrection mandate given to the church.

By the act of creation Jesus is Lord of all. He is the Lord, whether a Communist Chinese, a socialist Swede, a secularist Britisher, a religious Indian, or a superstitious African. Jesus is Lord. Though they may not acknowledge him as Lord, we know that he is Lord because by him all things were created. By the act of redemption, Jesus Christ is Lord because he has purchased us by his precious blood. His claim on us is twofold: he made us and redeemed us.

Confessing Jesus Christ means a complete surrender to him. It means total obedience to his command. It means absolute allegiance to his reign. In Communist Russia, for example, confessing Jesus Christ as Lord may mean coming into conflict with the ruling power. In apartheid South Africa confessing Jesus Christ as Lord may mean condemning the inhuman racial segregation and discrimination. Confessing Jesus Christ as Lord under the totalitarian regimes of many Latin American and African states, may bring us into conflict with the powers that be. In the increasingly materialistic and secularist West, it may mean a radical examination of our lifestyles and values. In every situation and instance we are to testify that the ultimate reality is Jesus Christ, not Caesar.

Excerpts from an address given at Urbana '84.

Tokunboh Adeyemo is General Secretary of the Association of Evangelicals of Africa and Madagascar (AEAM) and has been chairman of the executive council of World Evangelical Fellowship (WEF).

continued on next page

Faithful...

If all of us would rise up and confess Jesus Christ as Lord in our different situations and locations, we would turn the world upside-down as the apostles did. But today, the church is not doing well.

Instead of confessing Jesus Christ, we accommodate and conform to society. Beware of civil religion. Beware of cultural captivity. Beware. If Jesus is Lord, he has absolute control.

Whatever it may cost you, stand up and be counted for Jesus Christ. This is where mission begins: proclaiming Jesus Christ is Lord.

The second business of the church is that of discipling all the nations of the world. While confessing Jesus Christ is a resurrection mandate, discipling all nations is a Pentecost mandate. The Holy Spirit was not given to the church for private enjoyment. Never! The Holy Spirit was given to the church so as to set the world in revolution, on fire for the Lord.

The apostle Paul did not stand before King Agrippa just to win an argument; he was not there simply to confess that Jesus Christ is Lord and fold his hands. He stood before the king to confess Jesus Christ as Lord and to persuade King Agrippa to believe on Jesus.

Discipleship is persuading people to forsake their ignorance, their indifference, their skepticism, their pride, their corruption, their wickedness. And as they forsake their old ways, they are to embrace Jesus Christ and be brought into the fellowship of his church. This is our business. To this we have been called. We are to do it with compassion; we are to do it in the power of the Holy Spirit. We are to do it everywhere and always.

The third business of the church is that of suppressing all forms of evil. Any form of wickedness, whether it is personal, structural or societal, must be suppressed in the name of Jesus Christ by his witnesses.

In some instances, evil takes the form of ignorance, disease, famine and poverty. In such instances, we are duty bound to provide functional education, medical facilities, personnel and food. With compassion we are to share our God-given resources with those who are in need. At times evil takes the form of religious and traditional superstition, myths and magic. It is our obligation in such an instance to confront superstition and dislodge magic by the truth of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

The more rampant form of wickedness today is that of structure. This often takes the form of discrimination, violence and exploitation. We need prophets, prophets for Jesus Christ. We are tired of the Voice of America and the Voice of Moscow. We need the voice of the Lord. We need preachers; we need Christians that will stand for righteousness, for truth and for love.

The business of the church is more than just sharing with unbelievers how to get to heaven. We are in the business of putting down all forms of wickedness and unrighteousness in this age, in this world.



My heart cries out for Christian statesmen like Nehemiah and Daniel, prophets like Amos, apostles like Paul, queens like Esther—Christians that will stand for righteousness for the sake of Christ. Christians that will stand for justice, equity and truth. I pray that the Lord will give us ambassadors for Jesus Christ like those I've mentioned here.

The fourth business of the church is that of equipping the saints for the work of ministry.

We as Christians need to be thoroughly equipped for our mission in the world. There is no excuse for ignorance. We need to understand and explain the Word of God thoroughly, but at the same time we need to understand and explain the world that we are trying to reach thoroughly. We cannot be effective or relevant unless we understand the world to which we have been called to minister.

The Master had adequately equipped his church to succeed. What pieces of equipment has the Lord given to his church? Precisely three: the Holy Spirit, the Word of God, and the heroic examples of men and women of faith.

As a politician depends on public opinion for his business, and as a military general depends on his soldiers in a warfare, so the church depends on the Holy Spirit for its faithful witness. Many of us treat the Holy Spirit as a guest or a visitor. We pack him away in the spare bedroom of our mind. The Holy Spirit is given to us to anoint us so that we can do the Lord's work.

Power to proclaim the good news of the kingdom comes from the Holy Spirit. Power to heal the sick comes from the Holy Spirit. Power to drive out evil spirits comes from the Holy Spirit. Power to pronounce peace to a troubled heart comes from the Holy Spirit. Are we living under the power of the Holy Spirit?

Along with the Holy Spirit, the church has been given the Word of God. The Word of God was not promised, it was given to us. The Word of God is to enable us to stand against all that is against God.

From the inception of the church to the present, there have always been men and women who have had to face persecution and even death for the sake of the gospel. By faith they have stood on the Word of God. From their example we learn about the life of faith and about God. Can you imagine a Bible without the story of Abraham? Of Moses and Joshua? The story of the apostles? Do you think all these stories were given to us just to fill up the pages? Not at all. The stories of these men and women were recorded for us in the Scriptures so that we can draw strength, motivation and inspiration from them.

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One example and testimony we have today is that of Sadhu Sundar Singh of India. During his life he covered every part of his great country, from north to the south, east to the west. He considered himself as a debtor to God, yes, but also to his people who had not heard the good news. On foot he crossed the Himalayas to take the gospel to Nepal. From this man of faith and courage has come a song that has become my favorite: "I have decided to follow Jesus, no turning back, no turning back. You can take the whole world, but give me Jesus, no turning back, no turning back. The world behind me, the cross before me, no turning back, no turning back."

Lord, raise up men and women who shall be faithful to you and your mission unto death or until you return.



Excerpts from the personal testimony of Tokunboh Adeyemo:

Many people make the mistake of assuming that Islam began with Muhammed. I think rather we have to go back to Genesis 16 in tracing the root of Islam. Look at the story of Ishmael and Hagar and then cross over to Galatians 4 to see what has been both the theological and the historical antagonism between Islam and Christianity. The Lord in his grace and mercy brought me out of Islam into the glorious light of Jesus Christ the Lord.

Over forty years ago I was born to a rich Muslim family, one of the royal family, in western Nigeria. Being the first son of my parents, and coming from the royal line, I was destined one day to become a king of my tribe. Naturally, being born into a Muslim family, I was a Muslim. But over eighteen years ago I was reborn into another royal family—the family of King Jesus, the King of Salem, the Prince of Peace, the King of Kings. And what a difference that makes in my life!

Leaving college as a young man, I had the ambition of becoming the president of my country one day. And I sat down to make a plan, a ten-year development plan, of how to achieve that goal. I would go to work in politics. I would become an activist. And I would become a provisional secretary for one of the leading political parties in my country at that time. It was not an idle dream or speculation. I've always been made to believe that no aim is a crime. You've got to aim high in life. And so I was working toward my own goal.

My uncle was in politics and was in the first parliament. He became my mentor. There was no dichotomy between religion and politics for us, coming from the Shiite branch of Islam. The secular has meaning only in the sacred. And so religion and politics and the economy and what have you—they all go together. This is the golden mean of Islam.

During that time one of the teachers in my school—I was the headmaster at the time—invited me to consider the person of Jesus Christ. As a Muslim, I resisted. But he was very persistent. Consistent, hardworking, compassionate, loving, he kept pressing me to consider Jesus. And because of this gentleman, I started reading the Gospels and comparing Jesus of the Gospels with Islam of the Koran.

It was some time later that God in his mercy finally brought me to an open-air mission. A Muslim will not go to a church building because of the various theological hang-ups. I went to this week-long, open-air mission. The first night the evangelist preached, but I didn't hear anything. I was just there. The second night he preached again. But on the third night, the message came across from John 10:10—the promise of Christ coming to the world to give life, life abundant. And it was as if that message were addressed to me alone. On that occasion, that night, I decided to follow the giver of life. I made up my mind. I went forward and prayed with the preacher, who happened to be a South African missionary, of all people. But he brought a message, and I gave my life to Jesus Christ.

I went home and told my parents what I had done. And then the persecution began.

I developed an unusual thirst and hunger for the Word of God. I started just devouring the Scriptures. I wanted to KNOW God, the only way through Scripture. My people began calling me "prophet." "Pray for us," they would say. And I started praying for them in the name of Jesus Christ. If there is one thing that the Muslims are looking for, it is not so much the definition of the gospel, but rather the demonstration of the gospel's power.

I was rejected for a period of time, and I told them the Bible says when my father and my mother reject me, my God will take me up (Ps. 27:10). My family and friends at first would not believe the gospel. But today six members of my family have become Christians.

When I decided to follow Christ, he became my all in all. Absolute Lordship demands absolute surrender. My life is no longer mine. It is my Master's. Where he sends, I will follow. What he gives to eat, I will swallow. And he became my own goal upon my conversion. It is not the lands that I live in that matter, but the witness that I bear for Jesus Christ wherever he places me. Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, says the Lord.

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pp 150-158. pp 190-192





Katherine Fountain carrying Pumbu in procession



"Coming home" procession at Nyanga

Celebrating Babies ZAIRIAN STYLE

by Mary Score

I find myself daydreaming about the life and friends we came to know and love "over there" in central Africa. There were campfire visits, millet harvesting excursions, and sitting fifteen women to a log at women's conferences. There was the singing of Gipende hymns with four young girls who came to visit weekly. But standing out as a favorite memory is the African tradition of maternity homecoming.

Before the construction of the maternity building by Africa Inter-Mennonite Mission missionaries at Nyanga, women had their babies in their mud-plastered, dirt-floored, thatched homes. Although these homes can actually be very tidy and pleasant they do provide a suitable environment for tetanus germs. This combined with unsterile techniques of severing the umbilical cord resulted in a high incidence of tetanus and other problems which lessened the probability of infant survival.

Mary and Mike Score served with Mennonite Central Committee as agricultural extension coordinators in Nyanga, a CMZ church center in Zaire. They are now located at Kahemba near Kamayala.

Now women give birth in the simple maternity building with the help of trained Zairian midwives. They remain there for a full seven days before returning to their homes. This procedure gives the mothers a rest, but Zairian women are not a sedentary lot. They are more than ready to get home by the end of the week. They value the new additions to their families very highly. Motherhood is important in giving women a sense of self-worth, respect from others, and security in their old age. Thus a woman ready to leave the maternity is ready to celebrate!

I was privileged to have several close friends who gave birth during the last months of our stay in Nyanga. One young woman named Kambanda invited me to her "coming home" party. This was the first homecoming in which I participated. I so thoroughly enjoyed myself that I am happy to say it was not the last.

Kambanda issued word-of-mouth invitations to me and eleven other women to come to the maternity in order to escort her home. Some of these had met with her for a weekly Bible study. We expatriate women were told to come at four o'clock p.m. In anticipation of their notorious tardiness, the Zairian women were told to come a full hour earlier. We were all assembled around four-thirty.



Baby Pumbu being presented to Fimbo, the father

Standing on the front porch was Kambanda's husband, Fimbo, who is chaplain at the secondary school. He was waiting to welcome his wife and new son to their home. At this point, Pumbu's carrier, Katherine Fountain, an Overseas Mission Volunteer with AIMM, walked up to Fimbo and placed the baby in the father's arms. Fimbo, in return gave Katherine the customary "baby-carrying fee" of 50 Zaires, which was put into the Bible study group treasury. Kambanda joined her husband as the pastor prayed for the family. Then the couple together took the new arrival into the house.

As the next step in the celebration Kambanda and her friends gathered around tables to drink sweet, milky tea and to sing more songs in Gipende, Lingala, and French. By this time the women were warmed up. They pounded the table in rhythm with the music as they sang near, if not at, the tops of their voices. Unlike some other homecomings I attended, Fimbo had also invited some of his friends. The men sat on the other side of the yard where they visited together over their tea.

After drinking our tea, we washed our hands with soap and water from a bucket. Then we were treated to a delicious meal of rabbit, chicken and manioc greens. We ate with our hands out of centrally placed dishes. The meat and greens were scooped up with big pinches of steaming manioc mush. By this point the singing had stopped as everyone was absorbed in enjoying the good food.

After we had washed our hands again we finally gathered in the house. One of the women presented Kambanda with the gift money and a bar of soap. This was also the time when they were expected to share a Bible verse with the parents. They realized they had neglected to pick one out ahead of time. Once again there was a good deal of discussion and confusion until Fimbo assured them that it would be quite satisfactory to simply close in prayer, which they did.

It was nearly dark by the time the group broke up and headed down various paths leading to our homes. It was one of the most joyful experiences of my life. To share in that occasion with my Zairian sisters was another example of how missionaries richly receive as well as give in their service overseas.

Kambanda had changed into a new scarf, blouse, and ankle length skirt-cloth, all purchased for the occasion by her exuberant husband. Kambanda went into the maternity room for the last time (for awhile at least), to get her baby Pumbu. In honor of the occasion Pumbu was dressed in layers of new clothes and wrapped in a new receiving blanket despite the 80 degree heat. The invited women congregated in a corner to make their contributions toward a baby gift which would be presented later. Then they lined up, two by two, behind Kambanda and the friend she had selected to carry her baby home for her.

At last we were ready to move on. After much discussion, one of the women selected a song from the French-language chorus books we carried. Doing a step similar to the traditional wedding march, we started off down the path. Kambanda's house, however, was much too close to the maternity to allow for the proper amount of singing, stepping and clapping. Therefore the women decided to make several detours through the village to prolong the fun. With the profusely perspiring Pumbu we did eventually reach the path leading to Kambanda's house. Palm branches decorated her gate in honor of her arrival. We sang one of Kambanda's favorite songs as we passed between the branches.



Fimbo, holding Pumbu, with Kambanda and older children



▲ Housing in Kikwit

HOUSES

WITHIN REACH



▲ Glen Boese and Kikwit HPH Committee



▲ Meaningful



▲ Steve Boese and power saw

"I am realizing more and more that what we are doing is another facet of health care. Without sanitary living conditions, health care only treats symptoms, when the problem is nutrition, sanitation, housing, education and a lot of other things."

So wrote Glen Boese in his journal last year. Glen and Phyllis Boese are AIMM missionaries assigned to coordinate the Habitat for Humanity project (HPH in French) at Kikwit in Zaire. As part of the church's witness the Kikwit project is building several hundred low-cost but quite adequate houses. These are made available to families through interest-free, twenty-year loan arrangements. A local committee assumes responsibility for allocations. The Kikwit Mennonite Church (CMZ) and the Mennonite Brethren Churches of the area are deeply involved in the project.

Phyllis reports, "Twice a week our men have devotions together before they start work. At first Glen led the devotions and our Christian secretary translated, but now we have a Mennonite pastor on the work crew. He organizes the devotions though several of our workmen take turns leading them. We have a very good work crew with several sincere Christians who witness to the non-Christians."

▼ First houses dedicated July 1985





▲ Habitat housing in Kikwit



ment and reasonable homes

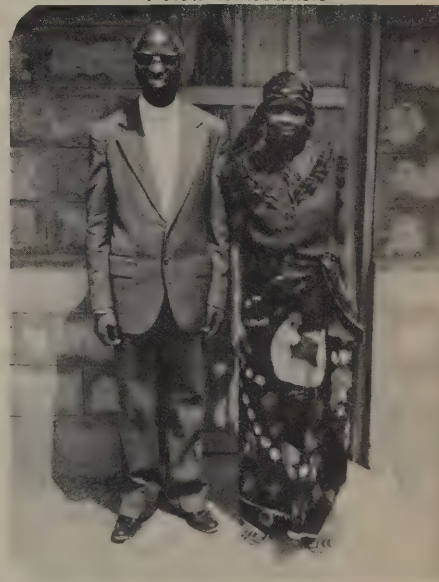


▼ Steve and Glen Boese with portable sawmill provided by World Vision

▼ New homeowners



▼ Housing under construction



Glen and Phyllis's son, Steve, was able to spend several months as a volunteer on the Kikwit project prior to his resuming graduate studies in forestry. His assistance was a great help.

"Our lives are entwined with those of our workers, our local HPH Committee, residents of our village, Kanzombi, and both the Mennonite Brethren Church in Kanzombi and the large Mennonite Church in the city of Kikwit. As missionaries we are very much in the middle of the problems of the people. We see their malnourished children, children without funds to attend school, family disorder, much illness, death, hunger and uncomfortable housing. Our constant prayer is: Don't close our eyes and hearts to these needs, but help us to cope and make decisions as to how to use our money and our time wisely to help alleviate misery when we know we are only five barley loaves and two fishes among so much need."

from reports by Glen & Phyllis Boese



Harris Waltner speaking to dedication assembly

KOALABATA CHURCH

The day we first went out to Koalabata to attend the African Independent Church service was very dry and windy. The pastor was teaching the children a song when Harlan and I arrived but their voices were lost to the wind. They never saw us because they had not heard us, such was the strength of the wind. The church was just four walls; no doors, no windows, no roof, only a dirt floor. The seats consisted of an occasional concrete block or the earth itself. The sun poured in that roofless church lighting every corner. It bathed the little group of children and pastor in warmth. I felt as if I had broken into something as sacred as the sight of one person praying in a mighty cathedral. The very special moment will always remain a picture in my mind. Peering through what would one day be a door we watched this little group of singing, swaying children holding onto the big hands of their ageing pastor, Ntate Monyatsi.

But recently this building was complete, painted, scrubbed, and decorated. It symbolized the combined efforts of many, a very great accomplishment indeed.

Now the door frame is installed and supports two heavy church doors. We saw it connected with a ribbon for cutting at the official opening in December. It is probably one of the largest and nicest of the Spiritual Church buildings we have seen in Lesotho. Its builders are pleased with the results.



The Koalabata church is a member of an African independent or Spiritual Church denomination called *Kerekeng ea Moshoeshoe* (pronounced: *Kehr-eh-keng yah Moh-shway-shway*) or "Church of Moshoeshoe," in English. Moshoeshoe was the highly admired first great chief of the Basotho nation. He had invited the first missionaries who brought the Gospel.

1985 was the one hundredth anniversary of the birth of Walter Matitta Pakhoa, the founder of this denomination. Recognized as a prophet, Matitta was widely used as an effective evangelist and preacher in the early years of the Twentieth century. It was appropriate that the new church building be dedicated in this jubilee year along with the celebration of Matitta's anniversary.

Koalabata (pronounced: *Kwa-lah-bah-tah*) is a traditional village located just a few miles north of Lesotho's capital city, Maseru. It is built at the bottom of an escarpment on the edge of the historic Berea plateau.



Procession toward place of meeting at the Matitta festival, December 1985

DEDICATION

by Claire deBrun

Celebrations began Thursday with the arrival of people from all over Lesotho and South Africa where the Church of Moshoeshoe has congregations. Visitors also came from Botswana as well.

A large tent was set up to accommodate the visitors. Four sheep and a cow were purchased to feed the cast of hundreds. Women were busy carrying water and preparing food for cooking.

By Friday the excitement was high as people continued to arrive on foot, carrying bags, with their luggage on their heads. Church leaders met them along the path. They were ushered into the church to sing, pray and greet one another. Each little band of weary travellers was met with the same procedure. Friday night many stayed up all night singing and praying.

Almost everyone had arrived by Saturday morning. What a bevy of activity! Pastors in black robes, Zionists in pure white and sapphire blue uniforms, Church of Moshoeshoe women wearing the traditional bright red, blue and

black dress. A government representative came in a Mercedes and a large group of blanket-clad Basotho men arrived on horses. A youth band in smart white uniforms from an Independent Church near Johannesburg and a TV news team setting up equipment were there. The young people's rally at the crack of dawn on a nearby mountain featured the youth band.

After many greetings, Walter Matitta was remembered with long speeches. Then came the church building dedication. We all walked seven times around the church to the sound of the band's music while a banner was held high to proclaim the one hundredth anniversary of the birth of the prophet Matitta. The ribbons on the church door were cut and the doors flung open. Among the new furnishings were the six benches AIMM had donated to the occasion as a gift and a lectern provided by the Maseru United Church.

The crowd marched into the church to unveil a plaque commemorating Matitta. There were more speeches.

Two speakers stressed the need to thank God and honor Him for the church. With gratitude they viewed Matitta as an instrument used by God to start the *Kerekeng ea Moshoeshoe* denomination. A tree-planting ceremony followed, an important event significant in Lesotho, a land of severe erosion.

After these formalities the women fed all the people a wonderful meal of bread, meat, rice, and boiled corn meal called "*papa*". Cabbage, carrots, and red beets, were the vegetables. Meanwhile approximately fifty Basotho men on horseback rode around and around the large field adjacent to the church. It was a spectacular sight as they galloped by, blankets flying, each horse in line behind the next.

The celebration went on into Saturday night and through the long church service the next day. There was more food for all.

By Monday evening everyone had left. The village was quiet. The tent was gone. The horsemen had ridden home. The large black cooking pots were empty. But the new church, though silent, was waiting and ready for the little congregation to arrive again the next Sunday to worship as it always had.



Samuel Mohono speaking at the Walter Matitta Centenary.



Lesotho's next generation at Church Dedication December 7, 1985



Harris Waltner speaking to assembly; Peter Khemeng translating



African Spiritual Church band from South Africa

1985 marked the fiftieth anniversary of the publication of the New Testament in Zaire's Gipende language. This ethnic tongue, sometimes spelled *Giphende* and, in older writings, Kipende, is one of four major languages used among the Mennonite Churches of Zaire. It is the mother tongue of perhaps three quarters of a million persons located between the Kwilu and Kasai rivers. Published by the British and Foreign Bible Society, the Gipende New Testament arrived in Zaire, then the Belgian Congo, in 1935. Its production was the result of many years of work by long-time missionary Agnes Sprunger who served with the Congo Inland Mission, now the Africa Inter-Mennonite Mission.

Fifty Years ~ The Gipende New Testament

A pioneer translator, Miss Sprunger first went to the Congo in 1916. She was from Berne, Indiana and a member of the Missionary Church Association, now called the Missionary Church. Agnes Sprunger was among the first to work at the new mission station of Nyanga among the Bapende ethnic group. By 1923 she had begun the work of language analysis, developing an English-Gipende dictionary. In 1924 she moved to the new station of Mukedi where she soon became involved in translation of the Scriptures.

Assisted by her language helper, Kamba James and other young Zairians, the translation process was described: "A young man who knew the Tshiluba language would read and translate into Kipende verse by verse. Before her were six or seven other versions, three English, the Authorized, Revised and Weymouth, or one of the other English versions. More often than not, the version was chosen which agreed with the majority of the other versions."

Miss Sprunger wrote, "We had a long search for the word 'love' in Kipende. At first the only word we had was the same as for believe, accept, desire, etc. Imagine the impossibility of translating a portion containing both words, 'faith' and 'love'!!

"One time I asked what a mother has for a child when she does all she can for it; the word '*Zumba*' was given. We had heard that word only in the reflexive up to that time, which meant to be proud, to love one's self. Then we asked if the same word would be good in John 3:16, and the answer was 'yes'. Then we asked if the same word would be good in the command, 'Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself'. The reply was, 'That is impossible, it just isn't done.' So it has been found to be a very good word."



Agnes Sprunger in 1961 after retirement

A decade of laborious translation followed with very little in the way of resources to help. Miss Sprunger extended her term a year in order to complete the manuscripts. By then the financial shortages of the Depression delayed her departure to 1933. She delivered the completed New Testament manuscript to the Bible Society on her way back to America for furlough. Even during furlough she continued to work on the project, doing proofreading in Berne as proofs were sent from London. Two years later, in 1935, the newly published New Testament arrived in Zaire amidst great rejoicing.

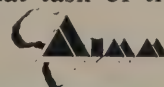
The Gipende New Testament was the first major translation project conducted under the auspices of what today is called AIMM. Earlier workers made use of the Tshiluba Scriptures which had been translated by pioneer Presbyterian missionaries.

Agnes served in the Congo over a period of thirty-eight years. She retired in 1954 after a term which had kept her in Africa 18 years continuously. Before she left, much of the Old Testament was in typed manuscript form.

While portions had been issued in a paperback format, the entire Old Testament has not been published. However, a complete Gipende revision was begun in the ensuing years, a project in which James Bertsche was deeply involved. The revised New Testament was published in 1977. With Rev. Bertsche's move to North America a Zairian committee carried on the revision project under the leadership of Rev. Ghymalu, and the supervision of the Zaire Bible Society. It is hoped that the complete Bible in Gipende will be ready by 1987.

In 1961 Miss Sprunger reflected on her many years of labor by writing, "It never seemed to me that it was a sacrifice to serve the Lord in Congo."

Christians in the English-speaking world, with an abundance of Bibles, have little understanding of the years of labor invested in making God's Word available in another language. Agnes Sprunger and her team of national helpers stand as a testimony of dedication to that task of translation more than fifty years ago.



compiled
by Bob Gerhart



Dr. John and Elizabeth Grasse left in April for Brussels to begin French language study prior to medical ministries in Zaire. It is anticipated that Dr. Grasse will work with the CMZ medical program at Tshikapa and Kalonda. Dr. and Mrs. Grasse are from Ephrata, Pennsylvania. They are members of the Akron Mennonite Church. They bring many years of experience having served in Puerto Rico for four years and Nigeria for three years under Mennonite Board of Missions, in addition to twenty years of private practice. John is a graduate of Juniata College in Pennsylvania and Jefferson Medical School in Philadelphia. He also has training at the Menninger Foundation, Topeka, Kansas. Betty is a registered nurse, having graduated from LaJunta School of Nursing in Colorado. The Grasses have five adult children, four daughters and a son. John and Betty will be supported through the General Conference Commission on Overseas Mission.



Gary and Jean Isaac have been appointed to a Bible teaching assignment in the Transkei in southern Africa. Sponsored by the General Conference Commission on Overseas Mission, the Isaacs will join Larry Hills later this summer for a ministry related to African Independent Churches. The Isaacs served fourteen years in Kenya with the Africa Inland Mission, much of the time at Scott Theological College. Gary and Jean are both graduates of Grace College of the Bible in Omaha. Jean also holds a degree from Northern Montana College. Gary received an M.Div. degree from Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, Deerfield, Illinois, and recently took additional studies at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminaries in Elkhart. The Isaacs have two sons, Mitchell, 10, and Stuart, 8. They are members of the Swiss Mennonite Church, Whitewater, Kansas. Jean grew up in the Frazer, Montana community where her parents, Mr. and Mrs. Otto Kliever still live. Gary's parents, Mr. and Mrs. Frank Isaac reside in Whitewater, Kansas.

BOTSWANA

Bokaa

Don Boschman
P.O. Box 33
Gaborone

Francistown

Garry & Diane Janzen
Jill, Mark
P.O. Box 669
Francistown

Gaborone

Ivan & Rachel Friesen
Amal Ruth, Sena, Philip

Jonathan & Mary Kay Larson
Karin, Jennifer, Erika
P.O. Box 703
Gaborone

Lynn & Kathleen Roth
Rachel, Zachary, Adam

(joint sponsorship with MCC)
P.O. Box 33
Gaborone

John & Madonna Yoder
Rodney, Karla, Daryl
(Partners In Mission)
P.O. Box 33
Gaborone

Molepolole

Ron Sawatzky
P/B Molepolole TTC
Molepolole

BURKINA FASO

Orodara

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Zachariah, Mariam, Aisha
Gertrude Bergen

Steve & Judy Harder
Esther, Nathan, Timothy

Dennis & Jeanne Rempel
Heidi, Jonathan, Susanna

Mathew & Becky Swora
Claire
B.P. 40
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N'dorola

Dan & Kathy Petersen
Joy
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Province du Kénédougou

LESOTHO

Maseru

Harris & Christine Waltner
P.O. Box 365
Maseru 100

Ta bola

John & Tina Bohn
P.O. Box 70
Peka 340

THE TRANSKEI

Misty Mount

Larry Hills
P.O. Box 65
Umtata, Transkei
South Africa

Umtata

Gary & Jean Isaac
Mitchell, Stuart
c/o P.O. Box 65
Umtata, Transkei
South Africa

ZAIRE

All mail to Zaire may be sent via:
B.P. 4081
Kinshasa II
Republic of Zaire

Kalonda

Tim & Laura Bertsche
David

Maurice & Joyce Briggs
Peter, Katherine

Donna Colbert

Mary Epp

Rick & Marilyn Derksen
Karina, Jeremiah

Steve & Pat Nelson
Stevie D., Candace

Kananga

Dennis & Dianne Schmidt
Ryan

Kikwit

Glen & Phyllis Boese
Don & Naomi Unruh
Lysianne, Janinne, Matadi



AIMM



John and Charity Schellenberg of Steinbach, Manitoba have been appointed for evangelism and discipling ministries in Burkina Faso. The Schellenbergs are members of the Steinbach Evangelical Mennonite Church and are graduates of Steinbach Bible College. They will be accompanied by their three children: Charis, 9, Lisa, 7, and Evan, 5. For Charity it will mean returning to the continent of her birth. She was born at Kahemba, Zaire, the third daughter of former AIMM missionaries, Ben and Helen Eidse. John's parents are Bill and Mary Schellenberg also of Steinbach. John and Charity are being supported under AIMM by the Evangelical Mennonite Conference. They leave for language study in Quebec in September.

Elmer and Jeannette Thiessen will be the first AIMM missionaries sponsored by AIMM's newest partner group, the Evangelical Mennonite Mission Conference. The Thiessens have been appointed to Burkina Faso to join the church planting team there. The Thiessens have been living in Winnipeg, Manitoba where they are members of the Morrow Gospel Church. They leave for French language study at Sherbrooke, Quebec, in early September. Elmer is a graduate of Steinbach Bible College (B.R.S.), Red River Community College (Civil Engineering) and Winnipeg Bible College (B.A. in Missions). He served with Mennonite Central Committee in Chad 1975 to 1978. Jeannette is also a graduate of Steinbach Bible College and has a diploma in Business Accounting from Red River Community College. The Thiessens have one son, Donovan, age 2. Elmer is the son of Jacob and Susie Thiessen of St. Germain, Manitoba. Jeannette's parents are Cornelius and Annie Dueck of Rosenort.

GOING...

ZAIRE

Kinshasa
Rick & Adela Bergen
 Nicole, Joshua
Herman & Ruth Buller
Peter & Gladys Buller
Peter & Annie Falk
Gordon & Kathryn Myers
 Benjamin, Joshua, Hannah
Richard & Marilyn Steiner
 Beverly Sawatzky
Henry & Tina Dirks
Appointed to CEDI, Kinshasa
Departure date pending

Nyanga
Lois Braun
Arnold & Grace Harder
 Karis, Christine, Matthew, Marcella
Elda Hiebert

Tshikapa
Leona Schrag

ON FURLOUGH

Gordon & Jarna Claassen
 Joshua, Caleb
from Zaire
Harlan & Claire deBrun
 Guy, Sarah, Ruth
from Lesotho
Irvin & Lydia Friesen
from Botswana
Sandra Friesen
from Zaire
Anne Garber
from Burkina Faso
Paul & Lois Thiessen
 Josiah, Ruth
from Burkina Faso
Henry & Naomi Unrau
 Bethany, Rebekah, Julia
from Botswana
Gail Wiebe
on special home leave

IN LANGUAGE STUDY

John & Betty Grasse
appointed to Zaire
c/o Bureau Missions Protestantes
 1143 Chaussee de Waterloo
 1180 Bruxelles
 Belgium

Rick & June Friesen
Stephen & Janet Plenert
appointed to Zaire
John & Charity Schellenberg
 Charis, Lisa, Evan
Elmer & Jeannette Thiessen
 Donovan
appointed to Burkina Faso
c/o Institut Biblique Bethel
 C.P. 1600
 Sherbrooke, Quebec J1H 5M4

COMPLETING SERVICE

Steve Boese
from Zaire
Gary & Maureen Groot
from Zaire
Judy Harder
from Burkina Faso
James & Leanne Zacharias
from Botswana

TRANSFER

Earl & Ruth Roth
from Zaire to Elkhart

FROM LANGUAGE STUDY TO FIELD ASSIGNMENT

Steve and Judy Harder to Orodara, Burkina Faso, in March.
Gordon and Kathryn Myers to Kinshasa, Zaire, in May.
Lois Braun to Nyanga, Zaire, in June.
Mathew and Becky Swora to Burkina Faso, in July.

DIRECTORY

AS OF LATE SUMMER 1986



Africa Inter-Mennonite Mission
224 West High Street
Elkhart, Indiana 46516



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MENNONITE HISTORICAL LIBRARY
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GOD HAS NO ACCENT!

God has no accent. Nor, we suppose, do we.

Isn't it strange that Americans can hear a Canadian accent but Canadians hear American accents? And both can detect a British accent? Those who have worked in Southern Africa can spot the Afrikaans accent easily, we think. Or any missionary can detect the "African English" or "African French" inflections.

What is this thing we call "accent" anyway? It is not so much which syllable receives the stress or prominence that we learned in grammar. Rather, we use the word to describe distinctive manners of expression, the lilt, tone or choice of words. Even the dictionary tells us it is "the speech habits of the natives or residents of a region or any other group."

That's just it! An accent is what we hear as we listen to someone speaking from "any other group." We are not aware of our own manner of inflection. We all speak "correctly" or acceptably for our own peers or community. It's the "others" who sound peculiar. "They" don't know how to say "house" or "vase" or "herb" correctly the way we do. "Other people" have accents. Foreigners. Outsiders. Newcomers. Or those not educated as we have been.

Which of course means we are the ones with the "accent" when we are out of our region, living in someone else's community. We "sound funny" when we live in someone else's country and try to speak using their language. Even if the language remains English the usage and articulation will differ.

For the missionary a goal must be to communicate, to be understood as we share the Best News. It demands giving up what we were convinced was the only way to pronounce our words if we are to adopt their "accent," their "manner" in order to remove the barriers of foreignness.

After all, God has no accent. True, He spoke Hebrew, but to the Hebrews, Aramic to the Galileans, Greek to the Greeks. But He intends to speak Tshiluba and Setswana, Senufo and Afrikaans, too. God is heard in British English, Canadian English, South African English and even in American English—in each without an "accent." And His message must be made available as soon as possible in a form that is natural to each listening ear.

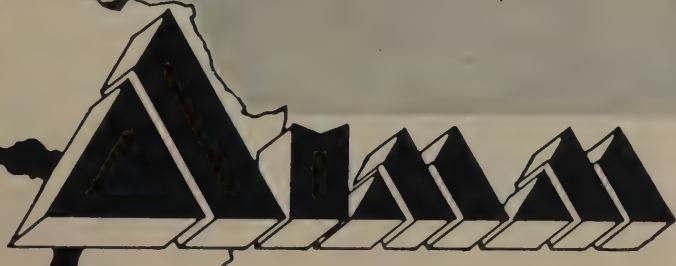
He did it before, at the birth of the Church. It may have been miraculous then in order to save time, but the listeners said, "And how is it that we hear, each of us in his own native language?" Acts 2:8

God's design is to do it again though normally now through the patient and persevering process of language learning and translation. The Gospel must be shared and the Scriptures made available so people can hear for themselves that God has no accent. He speaks their language, too.

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MESSENGER

FALL 1986

Africa Inter-Mennonite Mission, Inc.

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Produced during the Fall of 1986, this expanded AIMM Messenger serves as both No. 3 and No. 4 of Volume LIII. We regret the publishing delay that resulted from a combination of events and factors. Because of budget restraints only two issues of the AIMM Messenger are projected for 1987. But they will be very special issues in keeping with our 75th Anniversary year.

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EDITORIAL WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE? Robert Gerhart		

AIMM has experienced transition in mission leadership. On September 1 Earl Roth assumed responsibilities as AIMM's new (and ninth) Executive Secretary.

James Bertsche, Executive Secretary for the past twelve years, retired along with his wife Genevieve, after nearly four decades of involvement with Africa. It is appropriate to feature Jim and Jenny in this issue of the Messenger. Their dedication and faithfulness have been an encouragement and model to many. We pray God's continued blessing on them for many more years during what Jim called, "an unpredictable retirement." It might be unpredictable as to schedules and activity but we can be sure the love and concern for God's people in Africa will always be close to Jim and Jenny's heart. It is too soon to say, "That's it for Sha' Susie!"



THE COVER

Only a hoe—but in the hands of a Zairian woman, a tool for planting. In a church service at Mukedi, the women brought their hoes and seed corn to the platform, asking God's help in their planting. It was not magic or superstition but a sincere public acknowledgement of dependence on God, — not only for a sufficient harvest but for all of life. To them it was important to dedicate their tools and talents to God's will.

An African leader described the role of the mission: "AIMM is the hoe working in the field that grows lots of people." May we, in partnership through AIMM, be dedicated hoes or tools, usable and available.

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together in ministry...

Africa Inter-Mennonite Mission is a partnership of six denominations: the Evangelical Mennonite Church, the Evangelical Mennonite Brethren, the General Conference Mennonite Church, the Evangelical Mennonite Conference, the Mennonite Brethren, and the Evangelical Mennonite Mission Conference. AIMM has approximately eighty missionaries serving in five areas of Africa.

Our  th Year



New WA Coordinator Appointed

Joyce Gerhart began working as Coordinator for the AIMM Women's Auxiliary (WA) September 1. She will oversee WA activities and projects. In this role she also relates to the respective women's organizations of AIMM's partner denominations, providing a link to women's ministries and missionary family concerns in Africa.

After 10 years as pastor's wife in North America, Joyce served as missionary for six years in Lesotho, along with her husband Bob. In addition to responsibilities as wife and mother she was involved in Christian Education, women's Bible studies, Lesotho's school for the blind, and ministries of hospitality. The Gerharts moved to Elkhart in 1981. For several years Joyce has helped in the Elkhart office as part-time secretarial assistant. Joyce is mother of two, Barbara, now in Bible College, and John in Grade 11 in High School.

Every trip to Africa resembles a kaleidoscopic mix of sights and sounds, impressions, feelings and emotions. When I travel I leave a few pages in the back of my journal for notes. These may be totally unrelated one to the other: things that catch the eye, something one hears, or an impression to reflect on later. Let me share just a few with you.

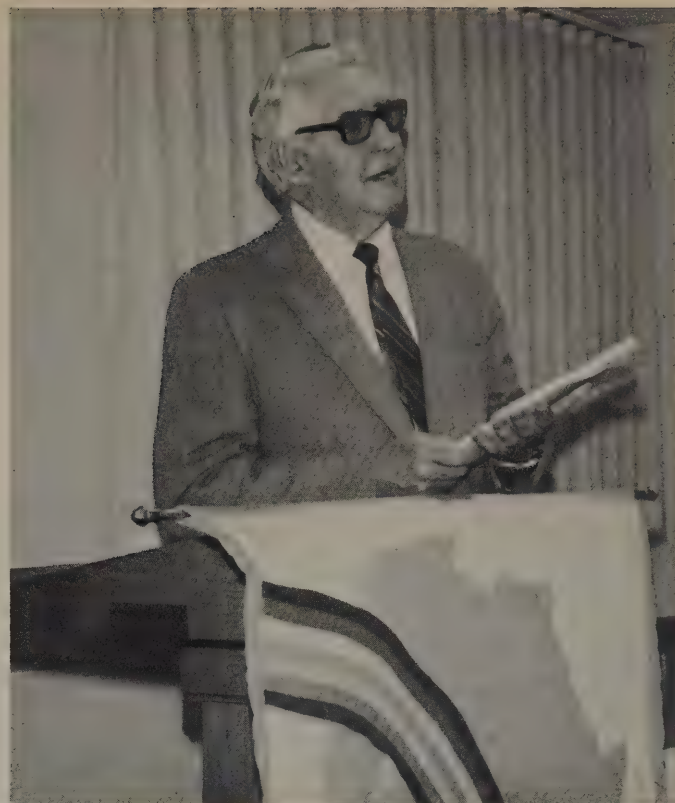
GEMS FROM JIM'S

Passing a meat shop in Gaborone we saw out front a big delivery truck. Over the side of the truck emblazoned in bold red lettering was "The Good Shepherd Butchery." The Good Shepherd Butchery? I rolled that around a few times. I'm not sure yet what I make of it, what significance there is in it, or if there's a lesson to be derived from it.

The warmth, the love, of an evening spent in the home of Zairian friends we have known across the years; sitting at the table spread with delicious Zairian fare, then going out in the yard, sitting under a tropical moon, spending a long evening just catching up with each other, sharing news of our families. The warmth of the embrace when we arrived and the warmth of the embrace when we left; ties of friendship, ties of trust, ties of shared experience, all welled up during those hours of fellowship.

It is that kind of thing that Jenny and I often talk about. We regret so much when missionaries terminate before they have mastered the language; before they have really become a part of African society around them; before they have had opportunity to enter meaningfully and deeply into the lives of fellow African believers. To come to the point where they can really begin to identify, to sympathize and empathize with them, to have some sense of how and where they hurt. And when that hurt begins to be reflected in the missionary heart.

The key is language, language, language. Until you can speak the language of the people among whom you work you simply are limited and deeply handicapped in entering meaningfully into their lives, to share with them, understand them and reach the point where you can begin reaching out to them, sharing your faith and ministering in the name of the Lord.



Jim Bertsche reporting to Board

JOTTINGS

by Jim Bertsche

A Sunday morning in Kikwit chapel: A lively CMZ congregation with strong lay involvement. In the spontaneous way of African services I saw a woman get up from the congregation and go over to the pastor, lean over and whisper in his ear. He nodded. She got up in front of the congregation and said, "We understand that this might be Jim Bertsche's last trip here. I'm from Mukedi station where Jim and Jenny were years ago."

She went on to say that we were of the missionary generation that brought the gospel to her father and mother. Because her father and mother became believers she grew up in a Christian home and had also come to place her trust in Christ. She said, "I want to sing a song for Sha' Susie."

She began to sing a hymn translated into Gipende years ago: More About Jesus Would I Know. She had no more launched into that hymn when immediately the whole audience picked up four-part harmony as a humming background. She sang her way through all the verses from memory: "More about Jesus would I know, More of His grace to others show, More of His saving fullness see, More of His love Who died for me.

"More about Jesus on His throne, riches in glory all His own; More of His kingdom's sure increase; More of His coming, Prince of Peace."

As she finished she said, "Thank you for coming to Zaire, to my people."

continued on next page

Seeing Susanna Rempel, that little blue-eyed blonde, folded in the black arms of the woman that cares for her in the Rempel home, at the Sunday morning service in their courtyard in Orodara. To the lively beat of the hymn that was being sung, little Susanna's hands, enfolded in the hands of the black woman, clasped an African rattle.

As the congregation was singing, this black Mama with little Susanna's hands folded in hers, shook the complicated beat setting a kind of counter-tempo to the rhythm of the hymn. Susanna, her blue eyes sparkling, and the black Mama, with a smile from ear to ear, were thoroughly enjoying each other as Susanna was being oriented, becoming part of her African surroundings in a very unusual and striking manner.



Cheba and the Old Man, at Kotoura

In Burkina Faso our team is growing. The program is expanding. We now have resident linguistic personnel in three of the six or eight ethnic groups which we have accepted as being our responsibility for evangelism and church planting.

We had gone out to Kotoura where Gail Wiebe and Anne Garber have been working. Gail was there. The time came for us to go home. I saw Gail look at Cheba, the first of the converts in Kotoura, and ask him, "Do we have time to go see the old man?"

Cheba's face lit up and he said, "Yes, we'll take time."

We followed Cheba through those winding narrow alleyways of a traditional Senufo village. We finally came to a little lean-to in front of an adobe house. Here on a bench sat the old man. He had his little turban on, and a little wispy white beard. Cheba pulled up a couple of stools and we sat down.

The old man is blind now. When we met him he reached out that uncertain hand that often signifies somebody with defective sight. Milky white eyes turned in our general direction. His story began to unfold. It went something like this: "I am an old man now. I've lived most of my life. Two years ago these missionaries came to our village. I've been a Muslim all my life.

"One evening in the public palaver square of our village we were told that there was going to be a meeting, so I asked my grandson to lead me out there with my chair and I sat down. I heard them talking about somebody called Jesus. I didn't understand much.

"I went home though and I heard about this man, Cheba. I know him, he's the son of our village. I called him. And for awhile on a day-to-day basis Cheba began to come and sit with me under this lean-to here. I began to ask questions and he started to answer. The day came when I met this Jesus you were talking about that night in the public square.

"I am now old, and I am blind, but in my old age and in my blindness I have found what I was looking for all my life."

In the corner of my folder I have this little statement: "In every human being there is a God-shaped emptiness that cries out to be filled." That God-shaped emptiness in the old man has been filled.

Philipe and Marte are a couple of Christians who had moved from another area looking for land where they might farm and where the rainfall might be a bit better. Committed Christians, they soon related to the missionaries and actively sought to become the nucleus of a new cluster of believers where they were.

When we rode with Dan and Kathy Petersen from N'dorola down to Orodara we passed Djiguera where they live. We pulled to the side of the road in the heat of the day. In the distance a little cluster of men were building. It was Philipe and a couple of local believers. They came to meet us. We went to their simple, humble little home.

Philipe found a backless bench he set up in a patch of shade against the adobe wall of their home under an overhang of thatch. Here was a family living on the frazzled edge of subsistence. Poverty. Before we had said anything he came quickly with half a gourd of murky water and some smaller gourds. Dan Petersen leaned over and said, "This is the tradition. The first thing they do is offer a visitor water to drink."

Later I discovered their well had gone dry and the water they had offered had come from a distant source and every cup was precious, but what they had they shared.

I looked around that simple little courtyard. Yonder lay a short-handled hoe; against the bush lay a bush knife. Three or four bundles of thatch grass that had been clipped were standing against a wall of an unfinished little hut. A few chickens running around. A few pods of baobab tree on a pile over there. As we were getting acquainted I asked, "What are the baobab pods all about?"

"Oh, it's one of our food sources we scrounged in the wilds, in the bush. Would you like to taste them?"

Out came Marte with another half gourd filled with murky drink and again the little gourds, and we were passed gourds full of baobab seed gruel, slightly stringent in our mouths. The seeds crunched like watermelon or sunflower seeds.

The conversation got around to the building out front. "What are you men doing out there?"

"Well, you see the little grass thatched shelter over here? This has been where we have been worshipping, but it's not really adequate. We are building a chapel out there, something that's fit for Christians to meet in, a fit place to worship God."

Phillipe and Marte's courtyard, Djiguera



Building the Djiguera church

continued on next page



Well at Kotoura

At that point we were interrupted and out came Marte from the little kitchen again, this time carrying a battered, smudged kettle that had spent many an hour over an open cooking fire. It wasn't coffee. They couldn't afford that. It was chicory. The half gourds were passed around again. I was amazed when I began to drink that it had been sweetened. Somewhere in their poverty that precious little store of sugar in the kitchen had been kept for a very special occasion. Chicory had been sweetened for the guests.

Then Philippe asked his child, "Go in the house and get my Bible."

He opened the Bible and turned to Psalm 108 and began in a halting, stumbling way to spell out a few of those verses which have a theme of triumph, a theme of overcoming, a theme of trusting in God, and a theme of conquering in the name of God.

We weren't done reading Psalm 108 when there was a flurry of feathers and dust out behind the shed. One of the sons came with a half-grown rooster. Philippe said, "We are so sorry that you don't have time to spend here with us so we can have a meal together. But since you can't eat with us here, we are sending meat with you for your cooking pot."

I was searching every way possible to decline the half grown chicken in a gracious manner, knowing that not once a month, if then, was there meat in their cooking pot. But I caught a glimpse of Dan eyeing me across the shoulder of Philippe and I got the message: "No way could we dare refuse."

We walked back to the road, past the chapel they were building. This time I looked at it closely. I doubt that chapel will be hardly twelve feet square, but it will be a chapel, a place of worship.

We walked out to the road, I with that rooster under my elbow. As we got into the car Philippe took me by the hand and said, "We thank you, we thank you for coming to visit us here at Djiguera.

"Carry our greetings to our brothers and sisters in Christ in North America. And if you have an opportunity, mention our names, Philippe and Marte, in the little village of Djiguera.

"Ask that they remember us in prayer once in a while. There aren't many believers here, yet, [note that: 'yet'] but by God's help, and by God's grace there will be one day."

In First Corinthians 16, Paul talks about "many open doors but also many adversaries." That certainly fits Africa right now where AIMM is at work: Many open doors; many adversaries.

I believe that God is sovereign. I believe He is at work in His world. I believe AIMM is a part of His purpose for the world of our day. And I, for one, face the future with optimism, believing that God will accomplish that which pleases Him in this world of ours, through His people and through AIMM.



This year, 1986, marks another milestone in my life. It doesn't seem possible, until I remember our son became a teenager a couple of months ago. Where has the time gone?

These have been mostly good years and I praise the Lord for this year, as well as the years past. I'm grateful for good health, loving Christian parents, a wonderful Christian wife, and two fine children. As I take time to reflect, I see many of the good Christians the Lord has brought into my life. I thank Him for them, for their interest and concern for me when I have gone as far as I can go on my own. He continues to send the Christian supporters I need including friends from Europe and Africa, as well as North America.

During my first forty years many of my dreams have already been fulfilled, some of which include work as a fireman, smokejumper, ambulance attendant and driver, logger, farm equipment operator and maintainer, truck driver, helicopter and light airplane pilot and mechanic, lay minister and now, an overseas missionary. Oh, what a gracious, wonderful God we have!

Along with the good reflections I see some that are not so pleasant. Life's roads are not all smooth, but the Lord gives the strength to handle each situation we encounter.

I'm disappointed when, on reflecting, I see only me, rather than Christ with me. Too often I have left Him out, but the Lord continues to knock on the door of my heart, and to forgive and enter, joining with me whenever I allow.

It's great to see how the Lord has used past experiences to prepare me for work in Zaire. Moving from place to place, a wide variety of jobs and interests, and meeting and working with a broad spectrum of people have all been good background for me.

CMZ Transport Truck



Maurice at the Kalonda garage

REFLECTIONS AND HOPE

REFLECTIONS ON REACHING 40

Maurice Briggs

Rather than spending a lot of time looking into mirrors I believe I need to live in the present and prepare for the future. Reflecting on the past from time to time does, however, give me hope for the future. Seeing what God has done helps me to appreciate what He is now doing in my life. Knowing the Lord is in control gives confidence and hope for the future.

In writing to the Christians in Rome, Paul speaks of God as a God of hope. "May the God of Hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope." Romans 15:13

Praise the Lord for life's reflections that give hope! "Now to Him who by the power at work within us is able to do far more abundantly than all we ask or think, to Him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations, for ever and ever. Amen." Eph. 3:20, 21





STUDENTS DEVELOP PRISON

A former secondary school student of mine, stood at my door. His usually jovial face looked drawn and worn. He had just become co-director of the regional prison. I had never seen him so nervous and depressed. His problem soon spilled out. He had been trained to bring reform but . . . then he described the prison: its lack of facilities, its chains, the beatings, the hunger. His one plea was, "Can you do something to help? You teach in the Bible Institute, you should be in a position to help. Formerly the Bible Institute students held services in the prison."

I agreed that our director might allow this program to be taken up again. He accepted that happily but remonstrated, "Don't forget that hungry stomachs have no ears."

After getting permission from the Bible Institute director I presented the problem to my Christian Education class. They were happy to organize the programs, but they thought that the missionaries could take care of the food. "No," I said, "We must work out this problem together. It is not good that only the missionaries give. We must all give according to our means. If you can only give a little because you, too, are often hungry, that little will be much more important to God than what we missionaries give, because we do not suffer. Let's try it. Then if you feel you can't continue the program I will accept your decision."

The students decided that each family would prepare a ball of bidia (manioc mush) to take to the prison. "It must not be any other food, for no Zairian feels satisfied unless he had eaten bidia," they said.

"Very well," I accepted, "then I will give the money for the fish and greens. I'll try to see if we can get a vehicle to take the food with as many of us as possible, the four kilometers to the prison."

It was decided the women would do the cooking and the men would take turns in conducting the meetings, preaching and leading the singing. Singing groups would be organized when possible.

Their faces shone with joy when we returned from our first visit to the prison. They had shared their faith. They had given of themselves, the very best they had, to people who were in a much more desperate situation. Some of the students would not be eating that day but they were happy. They had given to God. Their words and their actions had become one. They had become living witnesses. There could be no regrets, only gratefulness that they had the privilege to give.

Long-time AIMM missionary Mary Epp is sponsored by the General Conference Commission on Overseas Mission. Mary is from Saskatoon, Saskatchewan. She teaches at the Bible Institute at Kalonda, Zaire.

MINISTRY

by Mary Epp

The continuation of the program was accepted unanimously. With few exceptions this program has continued once a month the last two and a half years. Sometimes other missionaries helped pay for the vehicle. Once in a while when the students just couldn't give I used a fund provided by missionaries and friends for food and transport. But when the students could give I expected them to, as I also held up my part of the arrangement. Others would have gladly given more had we asked. But I knew my students were experiencing the joy of giving and personal involvement in the churches where they will soon serve. If they do, I am sure the people will experience the presence of God. Perhaps this is the most important lesson I've tried to teach in the last three years.

The prisoners now look upon the members of our group as friends. Every so often I hear that our students have given food to a prisoner who was brought to our local Kalonda hospital. Sometimes one comes to my door for fruit. This is the working out of the gospel. Jesus said, "For I was hungry . . . I was thirsty . . . I was in prison and you came to visit me." Matthew 25:35-36

On one occasion our student preacher gave an invitation for those who wish to give their lives to Christ to come forward. More than twenty prisoners responded. Among them at least one murderer. God will transform their lives by His Spirit if only they will cling to Him. With their background and present surroundings it is certainly not easy. But we know God is able, forgiving and faithful. Our trust is in Him. To Him be Glory!



Mary Epp and Students of the Bible Institute



Leaving the Bible Institute at Kalonda



Bible Institute Faculty: from left, Tim Bertsche, Rev. Majao, Director Kabundji, Mrs. Kabundji, Mary Epp, Sandra Friesen

A Glimpse Back



David Lupere Mawapi graduating from Bible Institute

I was born in the 1930's about 50 miles from Djoko Punda where the first missionaries came in 1912. My people strongly resented the influence of missionaries and white people in general. The missionaries sought ways of reaching my people with no success. We were very stubborn and set in our ways and customs.

As I was growing up school teachers from the mission began to appear in some of our villages. The Belgian officials told the parents to send their children to school to learn to read mikanda (books). The first young person in our tribe to learn "books" was to become my father-in-law eventually. He was something of a celebrity. He could read lines written on a piece of paper. The State officials would send messengers with a piece of paper fixed in the end of a palm branch. He could understand all the words of their written message! What strange magic these white people had!

Former missionary Glenn Rocke submitted the testimony of his friend and colleague, Zairian pastor David Lupere Mawapi now living near Tshikapa. As AIMM commemorates 75 years of witness in Africa we do well to hear from those who found life through the Gospel.

When I was 10 years old our neighboring village had a teacher from the mission for several months. Besides teaching "books" this man also taught about God and his son, Jesus. He told how people were raised from the dead. Also that Jesus came back to life again after being dead for three days. The people of this village were not at all happy to have this teacher who was sent by the white folk at the mission. They often threatened his life. They told him to go back to his Baluba tribe at the mission. But he persisted in teaching children "books" and about God and Jesus.

One day a villager died and was awaiting burial. Some of the old fathers got the idea that they were going to put this teacher from the mission to the test. If his God can raise people from the dead we will now see if this be true or not. They caught the teacher and tied him with strong vines to the dead man who was to be buried at sundown. He was told to bring the dead man back to life. If he failed to do so before sundown, he and the corpse would be thrown in the grave and be buried together. The dead man and the teacher were left lying in the sun just next to the grave. Every person in the village and from neighboring villages were gathered nearby in the shade to see what would happen. The hours of the day would soon be drawing to a close.

WE DID NOT



Village School in Zaire

Two hours before sundown the villagers began to hear noises of a crowd of people approaching. The fathers sent young men to find out what was going on. Soon they came running back breathlessly with the news that a Belgian state official was coming with his police to check on the population in the area. Everyone knew that the Belgian official would be seeking out the mission school teacher for a place of lodging and to provide a place where he could conduct his business. The village fathers lost no time cutting the vines off their hostage and putting things back in a semblance of order before the official arrived. Had the stateman found out what was going on the entire village would have been punished severely.

The fact that amazed me most was that this Baluba teacher did not run off after this had happened to him. The next day he was teaching his children "books" as usual. I thought, "This teacher must have something of great importance to teach my people. Otherwise he surely would have run off after dark and never showed up again."

I was determined to find out why this Baluba man stayed at his work. When the opportunity came I also learned "books." I listened to the good news about God and His son, Jesus. I learned why Jesus had lived in this world and about his teaching, his death and resurrection. I became a believer and was baptized.

For several years I also was a teacher in the mission school. In 1962 I was accepted by the church to study at the Tshikapa Bible Institute. My wife and I both studied in the Institute for three years.

During my days as a student I had the privilege of joining a group of pastors who went to South Kasai for a fraternal visit. Tribal wars between the Lulua and Baluba tribes had caused Pastor Kazadi Matthew and other church leaders of his tribe to move to South Kasai. This trip was made to affirm our desire for continued cooperation and fellowship with them even though they were living far outside the geographical area where our church began to work.

A fellowship meal was served to us visitors. During that evening of sharing I gave my testimony of how I became a Christian. I recounted the experience of the faithful Baluba teacher and the deep impression his life made on me. Pastor Kazadi and his people were thrilled to know that I was converted as a result of the ministry of their people. There was a long applause after I sat down. These poor refugees also collected a special offering for my benefit helping me continue my studies at the Bible Institute.

I am thankful for the missionary spirit of those early believers in the Djoko Punda mission. Many of them went out to face danger of life and limb in order to share the good news of Jesus.



RUN OFF

Why I Became A Christian

by David Lupere Mawapi

A Deeper Appreciation

by Laura Gilbertson Bertsche

Since arriving in Zaire, I have gained added respect and admiration for Jenny Bertsche. As I am confronted with the challenges of life in Zaire, where there are few conveniences and many inconveniences, I find myself asking "How did she do it for so many years?" Not only did she carry the roles of wife and mother, but she spent years teaching missionary children, girls secondary school and Lycee Miodi at Nyanga. She was actively involved in a women's ministries for Zairian women wherever she lived, including her involvement with Women's Auxiliary in the AIMM office in Elkhart.

What has it meant for Jenny to carry the role of missionary wife and mother? Many times it meant long periods of separation from her husband, often being left alone to cope with small children on isolated mission stations. It meant having to be ready to feed and house guests at a moment's notice without the aid of a local grocery store at hand. For Jenny it meant being forced to flee Zaire after independence and remain in the U.S. alone, with three young children, while her husband went back to Zaire for a year. It has meant watching her house and everything in it burn to the ground while being held hostage by rebel soldiers and then having the courage to stay on in Zaire and put together a home again. As a missionary mother, Jenny often felt the pain of separation from her children, yet she gave them the gift of a solid, loving homelife to remember. She instilled in them the principles of Christian character which reflect godly parenting.

I do not know all that Jenny has done for the women of the Zaire Mennonite Church in her years of service with AIMM but many of them have shared with me how much she taught them or helped them in years past. She is well remembered among the women here.

Jenny Bertsche has given 38 years of faithful and selfless service to AIMM, often in the "behind the scenes" thankless tasks. As a missionary wife, mother, and servant she deserves highest commendations. I am proud of the heritage and example she has left me as her daughter-in-law.



Laura Gilbertson Bertsche lives in Kalonda, Zaire with her husband, Tim, and two children, David and Marie. They are sponsored with AIMM by the Evangelical Mennonite Churches and are members of the Grace Church, Morton, Illinois.



Laura Bertsche



Jenny Bertsche at her desk

my special privilege

by Jenny Bertsche



Jenny Bertsche served as Coordinator for the AIMM Women's Auxiliary for 11 years beginning in 1975. This interview took place shortly before her retirement in August, 1986.

AIMM: How does it feel to be leaving an active involvement in AIMM after 38 years?

Jenny: It's traumatic because CIM and AIMM have been such a part of our lives for so long. But I also have a sense of having finished our course, finished what we set out to do and, most of all, the time seems right. Jim and I are both turning 65 this year. The time just seems right to be stepping aside.

What do you look forward to most of all?

I'm looking forward especially to three things. Number one, personal quality time with Jim. As most of our married life I have deferred to his AIMM schedule I'm really looking forward to some special quality time to spend with Jim in doing things that we've been wanting to do. And two, I'm looking forward to more time with my children and my grandchildren. There's always so much you'd like to do with them, or wish you could do but the schedule has been so busy. I'm really looking forward to that. And three, there's an excitement and a challenge for me in just what the Lord might have for us yet to do, that's yet to come. That's an excitement that I'm looking forward to.

Do you consider your ministries finished at this point?

Not at all.

What are some of your hobby interests?

I love being out of doors, working in the garden and the yard. That's my thing. As much as possible I'm outdoors all summer long. In the wintertime we're looking forward to doing some special projects. I have never organized my photo albums, and we haven't sorted our slides and my husband wants to work on the Bertsche family archives. We just have umpteen projects that we're looking forward to doing in the winter time.

Thinking back to the years before coming to Elkhart office, what were your favorite times in Zaire?

First of all, I loved Zaire from day one. I loved its beauty and I immediately loved the women of Congo/Zaire. Something just clicked at the beginning. And some of my favorite times were being with those women and girls, relating to them and listening to them and ministering to them.

Some of the special fun times that I looked forward to were times on the station that we planned when our children came home from boarding school. Then the one time a year when we got off the station and went out for a vacation at Lake Madimape. That was very special. As a family we would go out to this far away lake where there were no roads, only the other family that you went with, maybe two families. This was very, very special.

continued on next page

How have the roles of women changed in Zaire since you first went to Africa?

The role has changed very, very much. When we arrived there in 1949, little girls were scarcely sent to school. It was really sad. It was the boys in the village who needed education, after all, girls were only supposed to do the work, carry the wood, carry the water and help take care of the little brothers and sisters, and some day marry and do the same kind of work again and bear more children. It was really sad. The missionaries were really the pioneer people who brought the girls into the schools. And now, in the 1980's we have lots and lots of girls in secondary school, and we even have a few women in the university in Kinshasa. So that's exciting.

What was most rewarding about your mission work?

There was a period in Congo in the 1960's when so many people were becoming Christians and we were just adding members to the church. I was able to help with the catechism classes. It was when boys and girls in the schools were around 5th and 6th grade. They were being trained and disciplined. And we were baptizing so many people, and adults, too, were coming into the church, literally by the hundreds. To see this great movement of the church. The numbers were just swelling at an incredible rate. This was very exciting.

And then my special reward that I enjoyed so much was the close relationship that I was able to have with lots of the women in Congo. I also taught girls classes. So I think the special relationship with the women and the girls was one of the most rewarding experiences I had.



Visiting at Kikwit

Another thing that I really enjoyed was the close relationship with co-workers. When you live on a mission station out in the bush, you get to be pretty close to your co-workers. They really become like your sisters and your brothers. And to this day, some of our best friends are these people whom we worked with on these stations out in the boondocks. With your own relatives you grow farther and farther apart because you don't see them very much, but the co-workers you work with become closer and closer and it just seems like it's a friendship that lasts through the years. It's very rewarding.

What were the most difficult times?

I went through three major crises. In 1960 when Congo became independent we had a major crisis and anarchy became the situation. We needed to evacuate. That evacuation time from Kandala Station when all the other missionaries came through from their stations was a very traumatic situation. We were trying to take care of all the families and trying to decide whether to stay or to get out. Then our trip into Angola, camping there for two weeks, and making do with what we had, that was very, very traumatic. Finally we were ordered by Portugal to come on to the United States. We couldn't stay in Angola any longer. There was such anarchy in Congo we couldn't go back to our homes, so we had to come on to the States not having expected to leave at all. That was difficult.

Number two was the rebellion in 1964, the Muleli Pierre rebellion in the Kandala area. Once again, Kandala was a focal point and our station was burned out, in which we lost our home and all of our supplies and our new Scout car and everything we owned, except our lives. Working through the emotional hurt of that.

And then, in 1965 I had to have major surgery. I had prayed very sincerely that I might be spared that, that I could be healed, but I still had to go through that. I had the surgery in Zaire, at Tshikapa. It took me quite a long time to come through that because of what I had already been through. So those were the three very most difficult times for me in Africa.

Since 1974 you have been part of the home staff. What have been your involvements?

I would hope first of all that I've been a support person to Jim as Executive Secretary. That would be number one. And then I was given the job to be Coordinator of the Women's Auxiliary in 1975. Then I really enjoyed getting out the newsletter, which has come by request by many people to get out some kind of news so that they would have things to give as prayer requests and share, and I called it "AIMM to Inform". It was designed to inform a certain special group of people who were close to AIMM about what was going on. And then I think, I've been sort of the overflow person, the people person. Jim and I know everyone still living who has ever served under CIM/AIMM.

We have the privilege of knowing them. No matter who would come here as missionaries, we would know them. I could have time to relate to those people. If it was a couple with small, active children I could take the children and do things with them so that the parents would be free for their consultations and quality time with the staff here. People just home from Africa would be pretty much overwhelmed and bewildered and I could help be a buffer person to help them get back, a little bit, into USA and find things they were desperately in need of and take off some of those first raw edges. I could help people on the way out, who had come here to Elkhart for business. I could see that they got to the malls, take them to doctors, and things like that. I think I was a kind of overflow person, to work with the people who would come here to visit AIMM.

Would you describe the work of the Women's Auxiliary?

It's a support organization to AIMM. It's definitely very, very supportive and we make no decision without their approval. Perhaps the biggest thing we do, is the help with Material Aid, in getting the allocations that are requested from Zaire Medical to all the churches in North America. You should see the cartons and boxes that come in here by the dozens, things that are sewn, the hospital patient's gowns, surgical sheets, towels, and everything that's needed. It is a tremendously big work. And then we have done so much to help guest houses on all the fields, where you need guest houses and supplies, to take some of the burden off the missionary homes. We've helped with the hostel in Zaire where all the missionary kids have to go to school. We've helped with scholarships for certain key African women who have become very promising leaders. Also we've worked with Compassion Fund. The Women's Auxiliary has really been very helpful and very important to AIMM as a whole.

Are there any particular highlights from your work as WA Coordinator?

Yes. First of all, in the ways we've been able to help the mission work in Africa, whether in Zaire, Burkina Faso, or Botswana, or Lesotho. We've been able, I think, to be of tremendous support and help to the people out there, to the missionaries and to the work. A special reward for me was getting to attend all the Board meetings. That's a real fringe benefit, not only the AIMM Women's Auxiliary meeting, but the whole Board meeting brings a great enrichment to my life. And then, a special joy of working with the WA Executive Committee. Just getting to know these women. Each one of them are leaders in their church conferences, key women. That's a privilege and I value the friendship of working with these women through the years. I happen to like committees.



What areas of concern do you think need continuing attention in WA and the work in Africa?

First of all, I very much think WA should continue. I do not think it should be stopped. I would pray that it would continue in full force. It is definitely a support role to AIMM. And the support and the help that you can give to the missionary women is so valuable. I can't even imagine the help and support that WA here has been to all the women out there through the years, out in the boondocks in very tough circumstances, and having needs, needing somebody to listen to them. All of this is so valuable.

To help the women to feel a sense of self-worth. They work so hard and give so much, maybe we here, whoever continues on with WA, can continue to help them so that they can have more sense of being people of value and worth to the church, even to be able to help in the decisions of the church.

A special concern that I have: I don't think that AIMM has done enough through the years for MK's. I have always felt a lack there. We should somehow be staffed well enough that we can keep in touch with MK's, know where they are, what they're doing. MK's should feel free to come into the office and find "aunts" and "uncles" here to help them. These are children of two cultures. They're special kids, and we need to support them.

WA needs to continue on because of all the help it gives to the Medical work in Zaire. I don't know where that medical work would be without the help that the churches here have given through the years. And that's going to be needed for a long time to come. The sewing allocations are very, very important and WA should continue for that also. There are so many ways that we could help. I'm sure there are new ways and new channels that can be a part of the future of WA, some new and exciting ways.



Closing A Chapter

A FINAL FRIDAY

On Friday, August 29, Jim led the office devotional period for the last time as Executive Secretary. Here is a transcription of what he shared with the staff, concluding with his prayer.

I've been looking at some devotional themes that might have some relevance for our office this week. For Earl, who is arriving on the scene, the rest of you who are staying on the scene, and a couple of us who are departing the scene. On Monday we looked at the theme about Christians in the Making, and Wednesday morning we were looking at the theme of Treasure that is carried in Clay pots. For this Friday morning I would like to read a short one based on Matt. 6:34, "So do not worry about tomorrow. It will have enough worries of its own. There is no need to add to the troubles each day brings."

*"It occurs to me that worry is an offspring of egocentricity. Most of my worries are centered in the possibility of failure, or the fear of failure. Failure in my pastorate would reflect on my talent and ability. It seems that so much of the minister's efforts today are success oriented. Am I any more free from this than my brethren? Such questions as these are tinged with anxiety: Will we be able to get through the summer financially without going into the red? Will our every member canvass be successful this fall? Will the church members support the special services with this outstanding speaker we have engaged? In questions such as these subconscious worry eats away at my peace of mind."

And I suppose we could reword this paragraph to read "Will there be funding for next year's budget? Will our program in Burkina Faso really continue to move? Will this young team of missionaries really jell? Are there solutions to this CMZA hassle? What's coming of this administrative reorganization? What are Jim and Jenny going to do with themselves? How are we going to relate to each other in this office? All kinds of things.

"Each day does bring its particular mix of responsibility, its own troubles, its own burdens. Cannot I believe the promise, 'As thy day, so shall thy strength be'? I do not need strength today for tomorrow. It is when I try to carry both today and tomorrow at the same time that I begin to bog down. Plans for tomorrow must be made, to be sure. But when I mix anxiety with that planning I find that my efficiency level begins to drop drastically. I have committed my life to God. I have been called to a particular task and it is God's work. Can I not therefore trust Him? Trust Him

for wisdom, for strength, for guidance? When I allow worry to seep into my subconscious am I not questioning the character of God and the love and the integrity of my Father? The Master was explicit in teaching His disciples that they could trust in the God who knew all their needs even before they asked Him. Meditate on the Father-Son relationship. There will be no room for worry when this is real to you. Leave your reputation, your hopes for success and your anxieties to Him. His approval will contribute more to your peace of mind than all the commendation of men."

That middle phrase is so perceptive and perhaps is something that we can remember or mark down somewhere on our desks, "We do not need strength today for tomorrow. So do not worry about tomorrow, it will have enough worries of its own. There is no need to add to the trouble each day brings!"

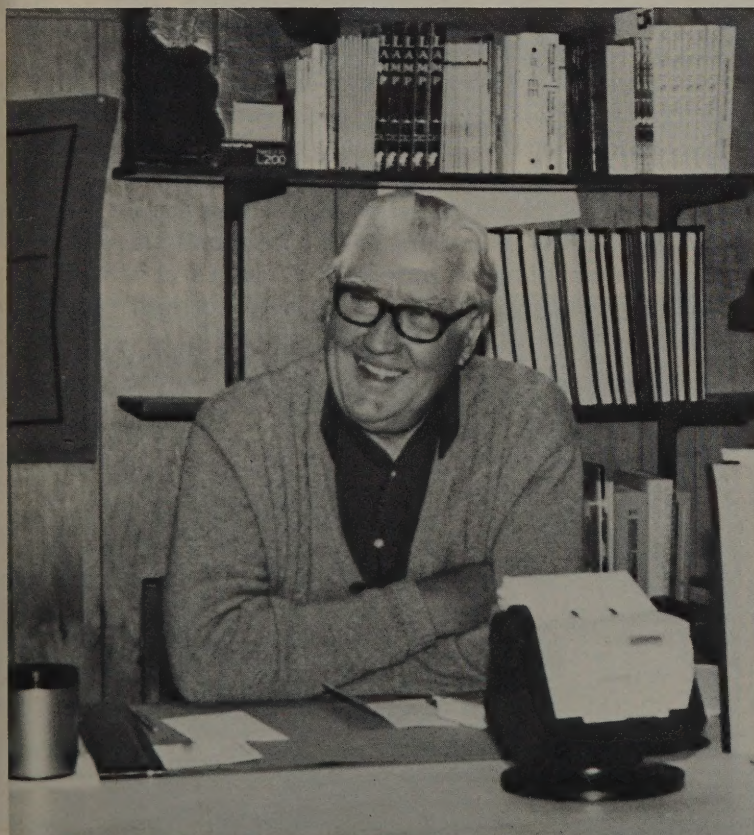
Maybe that is our good word for this morning, for all of us. It's August 29 on the calendar. In a special way we want to take this opportunity to thank all of you for your help, especially those of you we've been working with here for awhile. We want to thank you for your patience, for your support, your loyalty, your understanding in putting up with our peculiarities. Working with you has been a very good experience. I think we've been able to work as a team. There has been a large amount of understanding, sensitivity among us. It's been a joy to us. Our years in this office, in a very real sense, have been a very precious kind of capstone for our years with AIMM.

All of us are starting a new chapter. Earl is starting a new one in his life. A new cluster of responsibilities await him here, some of which are yet to be discovered and tested. For the rest of you, it also is a new chapter. It's inevitable in any group, when there is a change in personnel, there's a shift in the chemistry and dynamics. But I have every confidence at the same time that understanding and team effort and the pulling together which has characterized our time is going to continue. We've known Earl from way back and feel very good about the choice the Board has made. We know something of the skills and the wide African experience Earl brings to this office. I think it will be a real blessing both for you as staff and for AIMM.

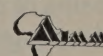
*For Preachers Only by G. Byron Deshler, 1973, Zondervan, Grand Rapids.

Jim's Prayer:

Dear Lord, in your design and purpose, in the ebb and flow and cycles of nature round about us, our lives have a way of falling into chapters and this day marks a closing of a chapter and opening of a chapter in all of our lives. We just want to thank and praise you for AIMM, an organization that we believe you yourself brought into being years ago. Thanks for those pioneers upon whom you laid your hand in days past who responded to the nudging of your Spirit and launched into an experience and a world about which they knew so very little. Some of them paid the price of their own lives, but helped to lay those early foundations. We thank you for those who labored across the years in the heat of the day, both black and white, who with so little in the way of support and resources were faithful to your call upon them and helped in spreading the Word, sowing the seed. The people have changed, the teams have changed, the composition of the board has changed again and again, and the people in the AIMM office have followed one another, but always You had those people whom you chose to continue to carry on the work that you have granted this inter-Mennonite organization on the continent of Africa. As we look back and remind ourselves of your faithfulness, your blessing, your enabling, the way that you have gone before, the way you have protected, the way you have opened doors, we have every confidence that you will continue to provide this help and this direction in the days that are ahead. We thank you especially for Earl and Ruth in this time of major transition in their lives.



We ask for a special sense of your presence, your blessing, a sense of peace, a sense of assurance, that as you call, you enable. We pray for these staff members, whom we've come to appreciate and love so much. Thank you for their faithfulness and for the abilities and skills and gifts that they give so unreservedly to you. We ask that a sense of cohesion and team, partnership, collaboration, may emerge, that together they may give ongoing leadership to AIMM and especially the AIMM team. And then Father, we want to thank you yet once again for the team that is on the field, for those who are in preparation and in various stages of the candidate process. We marvel again and again at the way you work, and how through your Spirit you deal with people, sensitize them to the challenge of overseas mission, and the way they come prepared to commit themselves, desiring to serve you. Thank you for the new group of candidates that are starting in French study. Thank you, Father, for others who are in early stages of discussion about possible assignments and for those that are on the field, some in their first terms, some after many years of service, many of them in circumstances that are uncertain, many of them confronted by problems for which they see no immediate solution. Whatever their needs are this day we ask, O Lord, that you will surround them with your presence, undergird them with your strengthening hand. May they in all circumstances ever be aware of the fact that they are where they are because of your guidance in their lives. May they reassure themselves that you are fully aware of the circumstances, their needs, and their opportunities and that you are abundantly able to use and bless them according to your purpose for them. All of these requests then, our Father, we ask in Jesus name. Amen



THE TIME HAS COME

Across the years we'd always been aware that out there, sometime in the misty future, the day would come for us to retire from active duty with AIMM and to open a new chapter of our lives. Sometimes with such thoughts there was associated a lurking question: "But what if we'll not be ready? What if we'll not want to step aside?"

And now suddenly, the time has come—and we are ready! We are not only ready but we are happy to relinquish our administrative roles with AIMM and to turn keys, files and ongoing AIMM agenda to other hands.

Our years with AIMM have been immensely rewarding years. We've been blessed, enriched and, at times, tested. Occasionally there has been pain as well, but always there was fulfillment and reward. We have no regrets. We have only praise and thanksgiving to the Lord for having granted us the opportunity of attempting to serve him in overseas mission and particularly that in the process he directed our steps to Africa.

That immense continent and its people will ever remain a part of us. They have contributed so much to us. We've learned from them, been challenged and humbled by them. We can truthfully say that we have been the benefactors for having spent a part of our lives among them. We've learned much about life, about joy, sorrow and contentment. We've also learned something about the value of friendship and of fellow human beings.

This past January while in Zaire, I was invited one evening with the Roths to the home of Rev. Mukanza Ilunga in Kinshasa. Mama Mbongela had prepared a delicious meal. Afterward we sat out in the yard under the tropical night sky and exchanged news about friends and family and reminisced about days past. When the hour came to leave, we exited from the gate of their yard to begin the short walk back to the street corner of their city neighborhood where the car was parked under a street light. The path to the car, however, was uneven and it was dark. Knowing that I had poor vision, Mukanza reached out and took my hand saying, "Brother Jim, let me lead you"—and he did. Steering me around this puddle and across that drainage ditch and warning me of this drop-off and that projecting stone. I depended on his guidance and we arrived at the car without incident. Africa has often taken us by the hand across the years and led us along paths of discovery. We are the richer for it and we are deeply grateful.

Transition from Jim to Earl



James Bertsche and Earl Roth

We are also indebted to all who compose the AIMM family. I believe Jenny and I are in a rather unique position. We are at a point when we can still say that we know every one of AIMM's workers individually. We've been co-workers with some in days past and we've had the privilege and pleasure of having a share in recruiting and appointing the rest to service since we've been in the Elkhart office. How special and rewarding that is for us. We are grateful that we've had the privilege of working with an inter-Mennonite team for in that process we've met and become friends of some of the Lord's choicest people. We are truly grateful to and for them all.

We commend Earl Roth to you for your support, your confidence, your collaboration and your prayers. He brings widely varied African experience to his new role which will be a valuable asset to AIMM in the coming years. I've always sensed affirmation and support during our time in the office and we covet the same for him.

This is the 75th year of CIM/AIMM. There has never been any doubt in our minds that this inter-Mennonite venture in witness and service on the African continent was raised up by the Lord and has been nurtured and blessed across the years by a Divine hand.

Opportunities for ongoing ministry in Africa are limitless. It is our prayer that AIMM may continue to be an instrument of his purpose both in Africa and here in North America for as long as there are unmet spiritual needs in that immense land.

by James Bertsche



FINAL FRIDAY

GOING



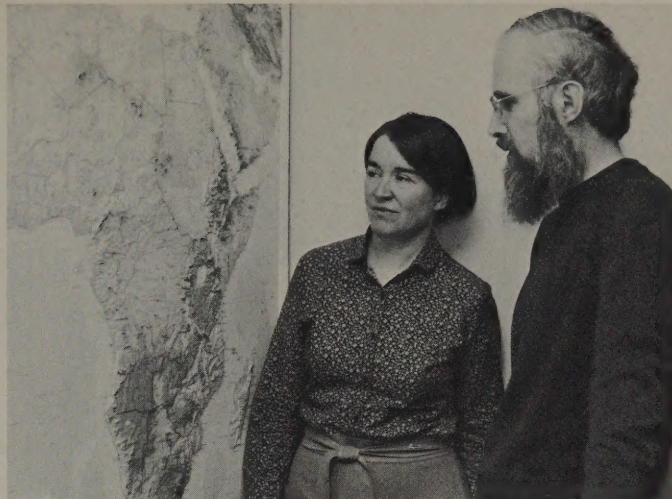
Passing along the "symbols" of the Executive Secretary's responsibilities
the official stamp the pencils and the cap



Last coffee break



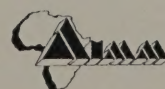
Leaving the office



Ivan and Rachel Friesen arrived in Botswana in early December where Ivan will be instructor in Biblical Languages and Old Testament at the University of Botswana. Rachel will do research and writing with the African Spiritual Churches. The Friesens have three children: Amal Ruth, 12; Sena Margaret, 10; and Philip Hilty, 8. Rachel has studied at Bluffton College (B.A.) and has an M.Div. from the Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminaries of Elkhart. Ivan has a B.A. in Social Science from Goshen College; B.D. in Theology, AMBS; Th.M. in Biblical Studies (OT), San Francisco Theological Seminary; and is a Ph.D. candidate at the University of St. Michael's College, Toronto, Ontario. He has taught in Religious studies at the University of Toronto, Swift Current Bible Institute, and Goshen College. The Friesens have previously served with MCC on the West Bank. Their home church is the Danforth Morningside Mennonite Church (MC) of Toronto. Ivan's parents are Harvey and Martha Friesen, Henderson, NE. Rachel's are Herman and Celia Hilty of Bluffton, OH. They are sponsored by the General Conference Commission on Overseas Mission.

Russell and Gail (Wiebe) Toevs arrive in Burkina Faso in early January. Gail has served in Burkina Faso since 1982. They were married on September 25, 1986. Gail continues her linguistics work in the village of Kotoura. Russell will work in agricultural development. He is a graduate of Bethel College, Newton, KS with a B.A. in Chemistry and a M.Ag. from the University of Florida. Until now he has been engaged in farming. His parents are Kenneth and Rosella Toevs. He is from the Emmaus Church, Whitewater, Kansas. They are sponsored by the General Conference Commission on Overseas Mission under the Africa Inter-Mennonite Mission.

Gertrude Bergen, is on a special one-year assignment at Nyanga, Zaire. Ms. Bergen has taken a sabbatical year from teaching in Winnipeg to teach the children of missionaries Arnold and Grace Harder at Nyanga, Zaire. She is a member of the Bethel Mennonite Church (GC), Winnipeg.



Africa Inter-Mennonite Mission
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WHERE TO FROM HERE?



Going nowhere. There were the tracks—appearing to be in perfectly fine condition. Wooden ties in place, adequate ballast, rails well spiked. But going nowhere. Tracks without a future. We saw the strange sight while visiting South Dakota's Black Hills. Driving along we had followed the rail line westward from the town of Lead but suddenly it ended. No bumper marked it as the end of the line. It just stopped. It came from someplace but was going nowhere.

Of course, it was obvious. This line had been abandoned and the track that had continued to the west was already removed. But those rails jutting out over the ravine were a striking symbol. It could represent either a move forward or the end of the line. It could symbolize a reach of faith to find additional access to a productive future or it could be the sad farewell to well-meaning intentions now forsaken.

For 75 years AIMM has been a track for Christian ministry. Do we have the faith to continue to lay additional track, reaching onward, outward to those still unreached? Or do we feel we have gone far enough, having come to the end of the line? Are there no more valleys to be filled, no more mountains and hills to be made low? Is there no more uneven ground to be leveled, or rough places to be made a plain? Have we completed the task of preparing the way of the Lord so all peoples can see the salvation of our God?

Where to from here? At a time of transition in AIMM's leadership and a time of evaluation of our structures and opportunities let's be sure we keep extending the track.

We are grateful for the solid foundation on which the tracks for our ministries were laid. For seventy-five years it's been a route on which we could serve together, as partners. The AIMM tracks have bridged ravines of differences, curved round hills of despair, and tunneled through mountains of difficulties. But this is not the end of the line! It has just brought us that much closer to new horizons of witness to a waiting world. We've been commissioned to continue, to the end of the age.

RWG

